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ABSTRACT

This booklet is a basic introductory guide to the rules and conventions of parliamentary procedure. Although it is intended for use by members of secondary school student organizations, it will be equally useful to members of other groups as well. It is organized into ten brief chapters that focus in turn on organizational questions; order of business; minutes of meetings; main motions; methods of voting; nominations and elections; subsidiary motions; privileged motions; incidental motions, requests, and inquiries; and restcratory and related motions. (JG)

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PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE WITHOUT STRESS

by Roberta McDow

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Foreword

Why use parliamentary procedure? Doesn't democracy mean that everyone has rights and privileges? Why write them all down? Don't they just get in the way?

Although someone approaching parliamentary procedure for the first time might ask these questions, the benefits of having operating rules for meetings become clear as the rules are used. Parliamentary procedure is a set of rules that enable people to work together effectively in groups.

It takes more time to decide which of 15 people should be allowed to speak first than it does to learn the simple rules of procedure that give you a quick answer. An idea can easily be lost or forgotten when there are no rules for what happens to an idea once it is presented.

Student organizations—organizations of *all* kinds—can benefit from the lucid explanations of parliamentary rules and the reasons for them that are included in this book. Student councils will find that their meetings can be more efficient, more valuable to the organization *and* to individual members, and more encouraging to broad-based participation.

Even groups as small as two can use the principles of courtesy and fairness that are incorporated into the rules of parliamentary procedure. And the principles can take a person who knows them from a student group to any of millions of organizations in the nation and the world.

The National Association of Secondary School Principals has published *Parliamentary Procedure Without Stress* in order to build and strengthen the democratic principle as practiced by student organizations and our nation's future leaders.

Owen B. Kiernan
Executive Secretary

Preface

"Take care of yourself!" screamed the White Queen . . . . "Something's going to happen!"

How many people do you know who have never belonged to a club or an organization of some kind? Probably none. Even a baby may become a member of a religious organization through an ancient rite, or he may have been given a stock certificate at birth entitling him to cast a vote at a shareholders' meeting. In our society, very few people have escaped organization membership. Most of us find, instead, that we belong to more clubs than we can possibly participate in regularly. Certainly there must be at least one club for every possible interest or cause in our country, and the total must run into the millions.

Organizations do die as well as multiply. Some are old, established societies whose objectives no longer appeal to new members. But the foreseeable future seems to favor the continued increase and power of organizations.

People join organizations for a variety of reasons. One of the most important is that the influence of an individual is greatly magnified through association with people having similar interests. For example, one worker may protest against the working conditions in a particular shop. His influence alone is not nearly as effective as that of his union. Or, one student may go to the principal with a request to have a shortened day so that there can be a sports festival. That student alone is not as likely to succeed as a student body organization with the same idea.

Although we may deplore the limits of one individual's effectiveness, the fact remains that usually we must work through organizations if we want to get things done.

Learning how to function in an organization, then, is one of the most practical skills we can acquire. It is something we can take with us from school and use immediately in our other ventures.

It doesn't matter where the skills are learned—in a student body organization, a church group, a vocational-interest club. What is important is that the skills are learned and put into practice for both the experience of the member and the good of the club as a whole. A member who deliberately uses his knowledge to "show off" or to obstruct the actions of his fellow members is neither helping the club nor learning the most basic skill- how to cooperate in a democratic organization.

But the member who does learn how to function effectively in an organization has an interesting, rewarding future ahead of him. Beyond the walls of his school, outside the organizations of his student days, there are the positions in his union, his church, his lodge, his party, perhaps even his corporation or his government. He'll earn the respect of the leaders in his organizations by the way he conducts himself at meetings. He'll have the admiration of his neighbors or his co-workers as he states a motion he designed to solve a particular problem.

He'll be respected not only by those who agree with him, but by those with whom he disagrees, because he is fair and discusses the issues, not the personalities of his opponents. He'll be offered the highest offices in his organizations because the members will know he can lead well. But best of all, he will have confidence in himself and he will have the satisfaction of knowing that he is contributing his best to his club, whether he is an officer, a committee worker, or a member without office. He will know that he is helping his organization to fulfill its objectives efficiently and democratically. In our society, no future is better than that, no contribution more valuable.

Roberta M. McDow

1. Inside the Organization

"I don't think they play at all fairly," Alice began, in rather a complaining tone, "and they all quarrel so dreadfully one can't hear oneself speak—and they don't seem to have any rules in particular; at least, if there are, nobody attends to them—and you've no idea how confusing it is . . . ."

The next time you attend a meeting of an organization, try to evaluate it objectively. Mentally note the good features and the weak ones. Did the meeting start on time? Did it proceed efficiently through its business? Was it democratic? Did the membership have an active role in discussion and making decisions?

If you are lucky, the meeting you evaluate will be a model of democratic action. At the stated time, the presiding officer will announce that the meeting will come to order as he taps the gavel once. All the members will stop their conversations and listen attentively. If there are opening exercises or ceremonies, these will be conducted respectfully. If there is a roll call, it will be handled efficiently and accurately.

The presiding officer will announce each item of business in order. The minutes of the previous meeting will be read and, if necessary, corrected before approval. Reports of officers, boards, standing committees and special committees will be heard and, if required, acted upon. Unfinished business will be brought to the attention of the membership by the presiding officer for action. New business will be announced and the members will propose, discuss, and decide on new actions of the organization. Announcements will be made, and the meeting will adjourn either before or after a scheduled program.

If you are not that lucky, the meeting you attend may have a variety of problems. Members may straggle in long after the scheduled opening time, because they know their meetings never start promptly. When the presiding officer finally calls the meeting to order, he may shout, pound the gavel repeatedly, and still fail to gain the attention of noisy members. The minutes or some important committee reports may not be ready, or they may contain so much irrelevant material that the members lose interest in them.

The presiding officer may neglect to inform the members what business was postponed to this meeting or what was left on the floor when the previous meeting adjourned. Perhaps the presiding officer dictates to the members, telling them what new proposals should be adopted and what should be rejected. Or, several members may do all the talking while other members who wish to participate are ignored.

Meetings like these can destroy organizations founded on democratic principles. If an organization is to function effectively, its meetings must be both democratic and efficient. Democracy and efficiency are the keys to "meeting magic."

Constitutions, Bylaws, and Standing Rules

Do you belong to several organizations? Your school student body organization would be one. Perhaps you belong to a chapter of a nationwide organization and also an independent, one-of-a-kind club. Although each of these organizations could have, in theory, the same members, each is different. The constitutions, bylaws, and standing rules state these differences. They give each organization its unique characteristics.

A large organization with subordinate units or chapters has a *constitution* that all of the member clubs must follow. Each of these chapters, however, makes rules for itself that are more specific—the *bylaws*. To amend or change their bylaws, most organizations require that notice of the amendments be sent to all members and that approval of the amendments be by two-thirds of the votes cast. These requirements protect the rights of absent members and

prevent hasty, unwise changes. Besides the bylaws, some organizations also have special *rules of order* for their meetings. These, too, usually require previous notice and a two-thirds vote to amend.

But some rules should be easier to change, such as the time of day that the meetings are held. Rules like these are stated in the *standing rules* and may be suspended or set aside by a two-thirds vote of those present, without previous notice to all members.

At this point you may want to locate your copies of the bylaws of the organizations you belong to. Are they divided into a constitution and a set of bylaws, or are they a combined document? Do they require amendment by previous notice and two-thirds vote? A quick comparison will show you that they follow similar plans. Notice especially the first few articles stating the name and the objectives of each organization. These are some of the differences that give each organization its unique characteristics.

Another basic difference may be found in the structure of the organization. Survey the constitution and/or bylaws of your student body. It may be modeled after the federal government with a strong executive branch, a supreme court, and a legislative body. If you have this system in your school, some of the ways you conduct business in the student body will differ from the processes used in other organizations. Few, if any, organizations outside of schools are modeled after the federal system.

Presidents and Officers

No matter what structure an organization has, there are basic duties required of the officers. For example, the president or chairman presides at meetings, the vice president presides in the president's absence, the secretary records the minutes, the treasurer takes care of the financial records.* The parliamentary authority named in your organization's bylaws (the "guide book") discusses basic officer duties in detail, and some organizations provide their officers with handbooks detailing the general and specific duties required of them.

Unless the organization supplies its officers with detailed descriptions of their jobs, it is imperative that all officers consult the bylaws to know what is expected of them. Here the specific duties will be listed, as well as some general responsibilities. Each officer is expected to fulfill all the obligations of his office and to assume no rights or prerogatives not granted to him by the bylaws or the organization's parliamentary authority.

Officers' Titles

As you know, the titles of officers vary, particularly that of the highest ranking officer. These titles are stated in the bylaws along with the duties of the officers. We'll use the title of president for clarity.

In the United States, "president" seems to be the most popular title for an organization's highest ranking officer. Sometimes chairman is used, too, but that title more often refers to the highest ranking committee member. "Chairperson" and "chairwoman" have been suggested as alternatives to the title of chairman. If an organization's bylaws specifically use the title of chairman, that's what it is—unless the bylaws are changed. The word chairman is really a generic term, so it is correct to use it to refer to either a man or a woman.

The words "presiding officer" are not a title but a term used to refer to the officer conducting the meeting. You would say "Madam President" or "Mister Chairman" but

*Fortunately, there are good publications available that present these basic duties. Perhaps your student body has copies of the *Profiles of Student Council Officers*, published by the National Association of Student Councils. Another is the *Congratulation Series* published by the National Association of Parliamentarians, 116 West 47th Street, Suite 217, Kansas City, Mo. 64112.

not "Mister Presiding Officer."

The term "the chair" is also frequently used. It means the presiding officer unless someone else takes "the chair" and presides over a meeting. Strictly speaking, the presiding officer should refer to himself as "the chair" rather than using "I," "me," etc. This practice stresses the impartiality and the impersonal nature of "the chair."

Impartiality of the Chair

To ensure impartiality, the presiding officer is restricted from participation in discussion, except in the motion-called appeal. If he must state his opinion, the vice president or the next highest ranking officer takes the chair. The president may then enter into the discussion with the same rights as any other member but doesn't take the chair again until the motion to which he spoke has been disposed of. The president should exercise this privilege only rarely.

Stating facts is a different matter. Occasionally, the presiding officer happens to be the only member who knows important information concerning the motion being discussed. He may state these facts without leaving the chair. The reason is that the chair is informing, not persuading.

The presiding officer also restricts his right to vote. He may vote in all elections in which the voting is done by ballot or any other secret means and vote in any other election to make or break a tie. If he votes to make a tie, the motion is defeated or lost because it failed to gain approval of a majority (more than half) of the votes cast. If he votes to break a tie, he votes for the motion to give it the necessary majority for adoption.

The procedure used in board and committee meetings permits the chairman, who is the presiding officer, to state his opinions without leaving the chair. He also votes freely in any election, no matter what voting methods are used.

Still another variation is found in organizations using the federal system. Some have executive branches so strong that the president may veto a motion or bill passed by the legislative branch. But even in these cases, the presiding officer, usually the vice president, is required to preside impartially. Only the bylaws of each organization can officially state the specific duties of the officers.

Members

Some duties of all members may be found in the bylaws also, such as payment of dues, attendance, and sometimes work requirements. However, most of the duties of members who do not hold office are implied by the objectives of the organization, its democratic methods, etc. Certainly each member should know what is in the bylaws, each one should be informed about questions and candidates to be voted upon, and each should participate in the activities and deliberations of the club.

Sometimes we see organizations operating as though there were two classes of members: the privileged officers and the "peasant" members. Clearly, this practice does not follow democratic principles, and it is contrary to the bylaws of most, if not all, organizations. Most organizations require that their officers also be members. All members are potential officers. Officers are, then, members with specific duties to perform.

Boards

Boards and committees are also entrusted with specific tasks to do. You may belong to a large organization that has a board of directors. Directors are ordinarily elected from different areas so that each region in the organization is represented on the board. As representatives of the various regions, directors make decisions for the organization.

Smaller clubs may have boards, too. Boards are composed of the officers and other members who may be included to conduct business for the club between meetings.

This administrative unit is sometimes called the executive committee, executive council, the cabinet, or a similar title, but it is really a board. *If an organization does not specify an executive board in its bylaws, its officers have no authority to act as one.*

Committees

The bylaws also name the standing committees of the club. These are the permanent committees whose members are usually appointed or reappointed at the beginning of each administration. Examples are the nominating, membership, and program committees.

Special committees are temporary, and they are not listed in the bylaws. They have short-term tasks like studying the wisdom of adopting a particular motion or doing a specific job, such as decorating the gym for a spring dance.

Committees can also be categorized according to function. For instance, "The Committee Chairman's Profile," published by NASC, divides committees into advisory, coordinating, work, and a combination of all of these. *Parliamentary Procedure in Action*, a popular and informative filmstrip series, lists them as committees to act, to investigate, and to investigate and prepare recommendations. No matter how you classify a committee on which you serve, it is most essential that you know the purpose for which it was formed.

There are other important facts to know about a committee assignment. Who is the chairman? Are the members expected to select one of their number for that position? Who are the other members of the committee? When and where are the meetings held? When must the work be completed or the findings reported? If the committee is to make purchases or have other expenses, the members must also know how much money has been budgeted.

Ideally, committees are the backbone of an organization. They should increase the efficiency and the productivity of

the club and enlarge the base of the club's operations, giving each committee member a specific, individual contribution to make. This broad base also helps to prevent domination of the club by a "clique" or small, powerful group of members.

Recognizing these advantages, some organizations try to put every member on a committee. However, some precautions should be taken: each person should have a voice in his committee assignment; committees should be just the right size to fulfill their functions; limitations should be set on the number of committee assignments a member may have; and, if possible, no person should be the chairman of more than one committee at a time. The club's president should use his list of committee assignments to help keep committee work spread equally among the members.

New leaders frequently come to the attention of the membership by their committee work. In fact, committees are good training grounds for future officers. However, business in a small board or committee is conducted differently from business in the larger parent organization. For example, meetings of boards and committees are more informal and the chairmen may participate in discussions. As we consider how business is most efficiently and democratically done in the whole organization, we will note how the operations differ in boards and committees.

Committee Reports

One of the most important duties of a committee is to report to the membership of the organization. There are provisions for these reports in a meeting's order of business under the items "Reports of Officers, Boards, and Standing Committees" and "Reports of Special Committees."

Committee reports rarely need to be lengthy and detailed, but, unfortunately, they often are. Their content must be agreed upon by a majority of the committee members. They may be oral, written, or both, depending upon the requirements of each organization.

The reports begin with an identification of the committee giving the report. For example, "The Membership Committee reports that . . . ." or "The committee appointed to study the motion to have a spring dance reports that . . . ." Whether oral or written, reports should be presented in the third person. The committee's recommendations are stated at the end. The complete report might be something like this:

> *The committee studying the motion to have an installation dinner at The Barbecue Pit reports that the banquet room is available any Friday in May. The committee therefore recommends the adoption of the following resolution:* "Resolved, *That the installation of new officers will be held at a dinner meeting on May 28 at 6:00 p.m. at the Barbecue Pit.*

An oral report or a reading of a written report is usually presented by the chairman, who then moves the adoption of the resolution. No second is necessary, because more than one person on the committee has already agreed to the recomendations in the report. The presiding officer then states the resolution and handles it like any other main motion.

A written committee report may be signed by the chairman using his title or, especially if it is a report of particular importance, it may be signed by all the members agreeing to it. If several committee members sign, the chairman's name appears first and his title is omitted.

Some organizations make evaluation reports at the end of a job or a term of office. These evaluations provide continuity from one administration to the next and give new committee members valuable information on how to fulfill their functions. Since these evaluations are primarily designed to aid future committees, reporting to the general membership may be unnecessary. The executive board and the committee may decide how much, if any, of these evaluation reports should be presented to the whole membership.

Sometimes you'll hear a member move to "receive" a committee report after it has been given. This motion is unnecessary because the report is being received while it is

being given or read orally. Another motion sometimes made is to adopt the committee report. If passed, this motion means that the organization accepts and approves all of the committee report. This unnecessarily restricts the organization on the subject studied or acted upon by the committee. The best way to handle a committee report with recommendations is illustrated above. After a report with no recommendations, the president may simply say, "Thank you," or, in the case of a written report, "The report will be placed on file." Then he announces the next item of business.

Occasionally, one or more committee members disagree with the majority and wish to present a minority report. The membership is not obligated to hear a minority report, however, and does so only if it grants permission to the minority to present its views.

Parliamentary Authorities—"The Book"

If you wanted to know what vote it takes to grant permission to a committee minority to make its report, you would probably not find the answer in the bylaws. Constitutions, bylaws, and standing rules are kept as brief as possible and usually state only specific details about the organization. General rules can be found in the book that the organization adopts as its parliamentary authority. One article of the bylaws should state the name of the parliamentary authority to follow in all cases not covered by the constitution, bylaws, special rules of order, or standing rules.

There are a number of books used as parliamentary authorities. The most popular is *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised.* Another frequently-used authority is *Sturgis' Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure.* All members should know which book has been adopted as their club's parliamentary authority.

Some members believe that an organization can function without a parliamentary authority's rules of order or parliamentary procedure. However, the constitution, bylaws, special rules of order, and standing rules then have to specify every rule—down to what is a majority vote and the vast number of questions that can be adopted by it.

At the other extreme, a few people try to use their knowledge of parliamentary procedure to restrict the rights of their fellow members. However, a basic purpose of parliamentary procedure is to promote democratic methods.

To be democratic and efficient, then, an organization will adopt a parliamentary authority. Except where noted, the rules described in this book follow those in *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised.*

2. An Order of Business

The White Rabbit put on his spectacles. "Where shall I begin, please, your Majesty?" he asked.
"Begin at the beginning," the King said gravely, "and go on till you come to the end; then stop."

Good meetings are the result of several factors. Certainly the officers and the other members must exercise their rights and fulfill their responsibilities. But meetings must be planned if they are to be efficient and democratic.

Advance Planning

At minimum, the president and the secretary should plan for the meeting. Each organization decides for itself who should be involved in the advance planning. Your student body organization meetings may be planned by all the officers with the faculty adviser. All the officers, then, contribute to the planning while they learn meeting preparation skills.

As part of the preliminary activities, the planners determine what reports are to be presented to the membership, including the treasurer's statement of the current balance and the executive board and committee reports.

The correspondence received by the organization is also evaluated at this time to determine what should be read to the general membership. Clubs with little mail and little business may have the time to read all of the correspondence that comes to them, but most clubs must keep letter reading to a minimum. If there is an executive board, it will dispose of much of the correspondence. Summarizing and excerpting letters can also save reading time. "Junk mail" that has no relationship to the objectives of the organization and no interest to members can be discarded. The rule of thumb on correspondence is to respect the members' right to know without overwhelming them.

The Order of Business

The advance planning should result in an agenda that can be duplicated and given to each member. The distribution of agendas seems to be most useful in boards and small organizations. A sample agenda planner is included in the appendix.

The agenda follows the order of business used by the club. This order may be found in the organization's bylaws, its special rules of order, its standing rules, or its parliamentary authority. The order is flexible, however, and business items may be taken up out of order by a two-thirds vote "to suspend the rules and take up the item out of its proper order." The order may be changed even when the order of business is specifically stated in the bylaws—without the usual requirement of previous notice. The reason is that the order of business is a matter of the club's parliamentary procedure rather than a basic rule relating to its structure.

The order of business described in this book is from *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised*. Some of the items may differ from those your organization uses, the sequence may be different, or there may be other differences. Every independent organization has the right to choose the order of business best suited to it, and many variations are used.

The items in *Robert's* order are: 1) Call to Order; 2) Opening Exercises or Ceremonies; 3) Roll Call; 4) Reading and Approval of Minutes; 5) Reports of Officers, Boards, and Standing Committees; 6) Reports of Special Committees; 7) Special Orders; 8) Unfinished Business and General Orders; 9) New Business; 10) Good of the Order; 11) Announcements; 12) Program; and 13) Adjournment.

The Quorum and the Call to Order

". . . nor did Alice think it so very much out of the way to hear the Rabbit say to itself, "Oh, dear! Oh, dear! I shall be too late!"

Meetings should be called to order promptly at the appointed time; but before the president begins, he should determine whether or not a quorum is present.

A quorum is the minimum number of members who must be present to legally transact business. The actual figure varies among organizations because each club may set its own, usually the largest number that can be depended upon to attend any meeting except in bad weather or other unusual circumstances. The quorum should also be stated in the bylaws. If it is not, the quorum is a majority of the entire membership, according to common parliamentary law. Many clubs don't have a majority of their entire membership consistently attending the meetings.

If a quorum is not present, the only legal actions a club may take are: to set a time for the continuation of the meeting (called "fixing the time to which to adjourn"), to recess, or to take measures to obtain a quorum. If you've heard your faculty adviser use the public address system to remind forgetful student council members that the meeting is in progress, you've heard an example of measures taken to obtain a quorum.

When a quorum is present and the stated time for the meeting has come, the president calls the meeting to order by tapping the gavel once and announcing, "The meeting will please come to order." When the gavel is tapped and the announcement is made, the members should come to order immediately.

The gavel is a symbol of authority that should be used sparingly. One tap accompanies the call to order and the announcement of adjournment. One tap may also signal the beginning of a recess after one has been announced. It is also used to call a member to order. On those occasions, the president taps the gavel lightly, reminds the member of the rule, and advises him to follow it. Hopefully, the president will not have to call any member to order.

In addition to the gavel, the president should bring to the meetings a copy of the agenda, a copy of the bylaws, the organization's parliamentary authority, a complete list of committees and their members, writing materials, and a watch.

Opening the Meeting

This optional item in the order of business is not included in the meetings of every organization.

Usually, after the call to order, the president announces the leader of the devotional or patriotic exercise. Devotional exercises may include a poem, a short story with a moral, a song, or some other appropriate activity. Some organizations have an officer called a chaplain who conducts the devotional exercise. Some of the patriotic exercises are the presentation of the colors, the pledge of allegiance to the flag, and the singing of national songs. Fraternal organizations often use a third kind of opening ceremony, which is part of the order's ritual.

Guests are acknowledged by some organizations following the devotional or patriotic exercise. Guests can be introduced at any logical place in the meeting or, if it is the custom of the organization, after the meeting has adjourned.

Roll Call

The call of the roll is another optional item in the order of business. Its purpose is to record the number of members present, to note absentees, and to confirm that a quorum is present.

The secretary stands and calls the roll in a clear, audible voice. Those responding say, "Present." If absences are noted and attendance is required, the president says after the names have been read, "The secretary will list the absent members. Will the absentee committee (or whoever is responsible for this function) determine the cause of their absences?" The committee performs this function within a day or two and provides the president with a written record of the causes for the members' absences.

Another time-saving way to take roll is to use a sign-up sheet. If there is really no purpose in recording the names of present and absent members, the organization may want to omit roll call from its order of business.

Reading the Minutes

The reading of the minutes of the previous meeting is the next item of business. The president says, "The secretary will please read the minutes of the previous meeting." The secretary stands and reads the minutes so they can be heard by all members. The minutes are then corrected, if necessary, and approved. A majority vote can postpone the reading of the minutes to another meeting, but postponement should occur only when necessary.

Normally, the secretary sits at the side of the president during the business meetings. After he has read the minutes, he resumes his seat and the president says, "You have heard the reading of the minutes. Are there any corrections?" The president pauses to listen for any corrections. If there are none, he says, "If there are no corrections, the minutes are approved as read."

If a member has a correction to make, it should be made immediately when the president asks for corrections. Corrections include additions as well as changes. After a correction, the president says, "Are there any further corrections?" He then says, "If there are no further corrections, the minutes are approved as corrected."

Organizations vary on noting approval of the minutes. In some, the president signs the minutes, followed by the secretary. In others, the secretary writes the word "approved" followed by his initials and the date.

Reports of Officers, Boards, and Standing Committees

Officers, boards, and standing committees make annual reports. In addition, there may be interim reports from any of them at the regular meetings. Correspondence and the treasurer's statement are frequently presented at regular meetings under this heading.

The president calls on the treasurer for a report of the balance on hand, usually after the approval of the minutes. At the regular meetings, the treasurer often announces the cash balance. No action is taken on this report, which is really a statement of fact.

The bylaws should state when the treasurer is required to submit a complete report, customarily at the end of his term of office. The complete report follows the bookkeeping procedures used by the organization. It is presented to the membership and following that presentation, the president says, "The report will be filed for audit." The auditors, in turn, check the books and submit their report to the membership. It is the auditors' report that is adopted or rejected by the membership, not the treasurer's report. The reason is that the general membership could not be knowledgeable enough about the organization's financial affairs and its bookkeeping procedures to judge whether or not the treasurer's report is accurate. This responsibility is delegated to the auditors, and it is their report that is acted upon.

If your club has no particular form to use for the complete treasurer's report, *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised* shows one that is simple and easy to follow.

Following the treasurer's report, the president asks "Will the secretary please read the correspondence?" We have already noted that the decisions about which correspondence should be read are made during advance planning. Motions resulting from the correspondence may be made after the letter reading or under the item "new business."

The reports of the boards would be the next business under this item. Probably the only board in most organizations is the executive board. Its reports are similar to the committee reports we discussed in the first chapter.

Standing committee reports are the last item in this group.

Reports of Special Committees

After the reports of standing committees are presented and, if necessary, acted upon, the president says, "The next business in order is the reports of special committees." Then he calls on the chairmen of the committees that have reports. The methods for presentation and action upon these reports have already been shown.

Unlike a standing committee, which is a permanent part of the organization, the special committee ceases to exist as soon as its work is completed. The presentation of its report is often the final activity of the committee. No motion is needed to dissolve the special committee when its work is done; it automatically disbands. However, it is courteous for the president to briefly and publicly thank the committee members and acknowledge their efforts.

Sometimes the general membership wants to discuss or act on a motion that has been given to a committee to study. The motion discharging the committee restores the question to the floor for consideration by the general membership (see Chapter 10).

Special Orders

Unless you have attended conventions, this item of business may be unfamiliar to you. It is really an appointment to take up a particular motion, but it also works at regular meetings of an organization. Suppose this situation:

During the previous meeting, a member stated, "I move that the resolution concerning the spring dance be postponed until the next regular meeting and be made a special order." The motion, which takes a two-thirds vote to pass, would be recorded in the minutes by the secretary.

When the present meeting was being planned, the secretary reminded the president that the spring dance motion had been made a special order for the meeting. It was then listed on the agenda under Special Orders. When Special Orders comes up on the agenda, during a meeting, the president announces that the spring dance motion was made a special order for this meeting. Then he states the exact words of the motion and asks for discussion on it.

If there is no special order, the president does not announce the item, nor does he ask if there are any special orders. It's his job to know when there are special orders to be taken up.

Since the item Special Orders comes before Unfinished Business and General Orders, making the spring dance motion a special order means that it will come up for consideration before the other items at the next meeting. A special order can be made for a particular hour, too. When that hour comes, the president announces the special order, states the motion and deliberations on it begin. A special order for a specific time interrupts any business being discussed except another special order set for an earlier time.

Nominations and elections of officers may be considered special orders without a motion designating them as such, ensuring that the nominations and elections will be held before other business items.

Unfinished Business and General Orders

Following Special Orders, the president says, "Unfinished business is now in order." He does not *ask* for unfinished business, because it is his duty to present the items, including any unfinished business and general orders not taken up before the previous meeting adjourned. It also includes any motion that may have been under consideration when the last meeting adjourned. If a meeting adjourns before a pending motion has been disposed of, the motion is not dead. The president should bring it up at the next meeting under Unfinished Business at the same point where it was when the previous meeting adjourned.

Sometimes you'll hear a president announce "old business" rather than unfinished business. The term may even appear on the agenda. "Old business" is not a correct term

for business that has not been completed—we don't call an unfinished car old when it's going down the assembly line. If old business refers to anything, it would be actions taken in the past.

In most organizations there is little distinction between Unfinished Business and General Orders. General orders are motions that have been postponed to the present meeting.

Unlike special orders, general orders do not have to be specifically named and they require only a majority vote. An example is: "I move that the motion concerning the trip to Disneyland be postponed to the next regular meeting"; the motion then becomes a general order at the next meeting. Although the term "general orders" is not used in the example, the motion to postpone creates a general order. General orders are taken up after any unfinished business which we have already described.

Motions may be taken from the table under this heading also. Since the president will probably not know that a motion will be made to take an item from the table, the member making that motion must address the chair quickly before the next business is under consideration. If necessary, the member may interrupt the chair while the next item of business is being announced.

New Business

When the Unfinished Business and General Orders have been completed, the president announces, "New business is now in order." This announcement offers the opportunity for members to bring up any motions they wish the organization to consider for the first time.

Motions bringing new business to the floor are called main motions. They are so important that we will discuss them separately in Chapter 4.

Good of the Order

Good of the Order is an optional item that is used more by fraternal groups than by student body organizations. It is an item in which the welfare of individual members, the quality of the organization, and similar topics may be discussed, without any motions being made. Since the proceedings are not recorded in the minutes, unless there are any motions that develop from it, the members freely express their views "off the record."

Announcements

Ordinarily some time in the meeting is set aside for announcements by the president. Business will be expedited if it is possible to confine all announcements to the period set aside for them, rather than to have them presented at various times throughout the meeting. But listing the announcements as a separate agenda item does not prevent necessary announcements from being made by the chair. Many organizations permit members to make announcements under this heading before or after those of the presiding officer.

Program

The program is another optional item in the order of business. It can be placed anywhere on the agenda, but it is usually placed near the end of the meeting. If some item of business, new business for example, has taken up more time than expected, a motion can be made to suspend the rules and hear the program. A primary consideration is courtesy toward the person presenting the program. It is not fair to keep him waiting because some item of business has taken more time than anticipated.

The president announces the program chairman who, in turn, introduces the program. He does not "turn the meeting over" to the program chairman.

One advantage to adjourning the meeting after the program is that any motion inspired by the program can still be made at the present meeting.

Adjournment

The final action of a meeting is adjournment. The procedure for adjournment is described in the chapter on privileged motions. A meeting can be adjourned as a result of a motion made by a member at almost any time during the meeting, or it can be adjourned by general consent.

Although a motion to adjourn may have passed by a majority vote, the meeting is not adjourned until the presiding officer taps his gavel and says, "The meeting is adjourned." Courteous members wait until that announcement is made before they leave or begin conversations.

3. The Minutes

"The horror of that moment," the King went on, "I shall never, never forget!"

"You will, though," the Queen said, "if you don't make a memorandum of it."

The official business record of a meeting is called the minutes. But sometimes the minutes are so long that a better term for them might be "the hours." Actually, the term "minutes" comes from a Latin word that means small, and that's what minutes should be—small or brief enough to record what was done, not what was said.

These concise minutes are so important that the officer who takes them is one of the two most essential officials of an organization. The officer is usually called the secretary or, if the organization has more than one secretary, the recording secretary. We'll refer to him as the secretary.

Clubs can function with only a presiding officer and a secretary, but if either of these positions is unfilled, even a small club will be unable to run smoothly. For this reason, bylaws provide for some officer, usually the vice president, to take the chair in the absence of the president. Likewise, common parliamentary procedure permits the presiding officer, with the approval of the members attending the meeting, to appoint a temporary secretary (secretary pro tem).

Why are minutes so important? They record the business that has been done. Without records, some actions would be unnecessarily repeated and some essential business would be left undone. Also, any past action could cause dissension if the members rely on memory alone to recall what was accomplished. Minutes, then, serve as an official record for the organization, a reminder for members who attended the meeting, and a summary of the meeting's actions for those members who were absent.

The Secretary's Responsibilities

The ability to take good notes is one of the most important qualifications of a good secretary. In addition, the secretary must be able to transform those notes into accurate and complete minutes. The secretary is responsible for storing the minutes safely, making them available to members who want to see them, using them to help the presiding officer to prepare the agenda, and reading them to the members at the business meeting.

The secretary uses a variety of machines in his recordkeeping tasks. Duplicating machines make possible the printing of minutes for every member, but the secretary alone is responsible for the compilation and the preservation of the official minute book. Cassette and other recorders can make a verbatim recording of an entire meeting, but the secretary must be able to separate what was done from all that was said. Typewriters can be used to produce a legible account of the meeting, but the secretary's handwritten notes taken as the meeting progresses are the basic source of information and must be easily readable. Finally, public address systems can aid the secretary to read the minutes in a large hall, but the secretary still must be able to read clearly and smoothly.

Organizations require many duties of the secretary, but none of them is more important than those relating to the minutes. A guide for note taking and sample minutes are included at the end of this chapter.

Contents of the Minutes

After centuries of recordkeeping, the minutes—or the journal as it is sometimes called—have developed into a simple, concise form. This pattern is used for the minutes of boards and committees as well as organizations of any size. Board and committee minutes are often more detailed, however, to aid in the compilation of the board or committee report.

The first paragraph of the minutes states the following information: 1) the kind of meeting, 2) the name of the organization, 3) the date and time of the meeting and the place, if it varies, 4) the presence of the regular presiding

officer and secretary or the names of their substitutes, and 5) the action taken on the previous minutes. The fact that a quorum is present or the total number of members in attendance is also important for the records of some groups.

Here is an example of a first paragraph:

> The regular meeting of the Oak Park Athletic Club was called to order on Tuesday, April 6, 1999, at 7:30 p.m. at the Park Club House by President Yvonne Smith. A quorum was present. The minutes of the previous meeting were read by Secretary Jack Williams and approved as read.

A special meeting would be noted this way, "A special meeting of the Oak Park Athletic Club was called to order on . . . ." The purpose of the special meeting is also noted early in the minutes, and the minutes of the previous regular meeting are not submitted for approval at the special meeting.

After the first section, each new subject begins a new paragraph. The reports of officers, boards, and committees are noted, with the names of the members who gave them and any actions taken on them. There is also a new paragraph for each main motion and each motion that brings a main motion back for action. An example of the latter, a restoratory motion, is a motion to take a specified motion from the table.

Each main and restoratory motion is recorded word for word except those that are withdrawn. The name of the person who made the motion is given, but ordinarily not the name of the person who seconded it. However, some organizations also record the names of those seconding motions. What became of the motion is recorded and if a motion was only temporarily disposed of, then any amendments or any other limiting subsidiary motions must be noted.

For example, one paragraph might be written like this:

> Jane Rodriguez moved "that the Athletic Club pay the travel expenses of the tennis team." The motion was seconded. An amendment to add "not to exceed $100" after the word "team" was moved and seconded. It was moved, seconded, and carried to postpone further consideration of the motion until Tuesday, April 13.

In addition to main and restoratory motions, the minutes should also record: 1) the number on each side of a vote by ballot or roll call or a count ordered in any other vote, 2) an important committee report or any other item the organization votes to have entered in the minutes, and 3) points of order and appeals with the reasons for the chair's rulings on them.

Clubs exercising their right to discuss business in a committee of the whole or its variations also record this fact.

The name and the subject of the guest speaker or similar program information may be noted, but no summary of the presentation is made.

Last, the hour of adjournment is given and, under that, the name of the secretary. The words "respectfully submitted" are no longer used to close the minutes.

Because minutes are a record of what was done, not what was said; they do not report remarks made in debate or expressions of opinion, even the secretary's comment that the program was interesting.

Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised states that when minutes are published, they should also contain a list of the speakers who spoke in debate and summaries or texts of their remarks. This practice refers to the minutes of a convention, however, and does not mean that student governments that distribute printed copies of the minutes should include summaries of what each member said.

Sometimes a committee, or an organization sitting as a committee, hears testimony from experts to aid it in reaching a decision. This testimony should be recorded verbatim in the minutes so that it can be referred to at a later time.

Correcting the Minutes

In the preceding chapter, we discussed briefly how minutes are read and approved. If no corrections are offered to the minutes, the president says, "If there are no corrections, the minutes are approved as read." Then he announces the next business in order and the minutes of the previous meeting become a part of the organization's history.

What if there are corrections?

When the president asks, "Are there any corrections?" any member who notices an error or an omission is obligated to state what he believes to be the correct information. The presiding officer continues to ask for any further corrections until there are no more. Then he announces that the minutes are approved as corrected.

But what happens if members disagree concerning a correction of the minutes? A vote is taken on the correction and the majority's choice becomes the official correction.

It is obvious, then, that every member should know what minutes contain to assist in recording them accurately. If the corrections are minor, the secretary makes them in ink, often in the margin, with the word "approved" or his initials to show that the correction is official. More extensive corrections can be shown in an appendix to the minutes with a note at or near the error referring the reader to the corrections in the appendix.

If errors are discovered in approved minutes, they should be corrected, no matter how much time has elapsed since their approval. The motion to correct them is the one to amend something previously adopted, a restoratory motion which we will discuss in Chapter 10.

There are some corrections that require no action. These are corrections of punctuation, spelling, or typographical errors that the secretary may notice after the minutes have been approved. Ideally, errors of this kind will be rare.

Deleting Items From the Minutes

Although it is possible to expunge or strike out portions of the minutes, this procedure is used only rarely and it is not recommended.

The purpose is to delete from the minutes some action that the organization regrets and wishes to rescind. For example, an endorsement of a particular candidate for public office might be embarrassing to an organization if the candidate later proved to be ruthless and corrupt.

But the portion of the minutes that is expunged is not really erased. Instead, a line is drawn through it or around it and the fact that the item was ordered expunged is noted in the margin with the date and the signature of the secretary. If the minutes are published later, the expunged portion is not included, but it is still readable in the official minute book because, at most, only a line has been drawn through it.

A more practical way to undo a past mistake is to rescind the motion if any action under it remains undone. Or, if the regretted motion was completely carried out, to adopt a resolution disavowing the action. We will discuss rescinding a motion in detail in Chapter 10.

A Note-Taking Guide

Many organizations provide their secretaries with a guide to make note taking easier. The sample on page 17 may be duplicated and used for your meetings. Or, you may prefer to design one better suited to your particular organization. Check marks can be inserted in the appropriate parentheses.

Inci

Minute notes for _____
(Type in name of organization before duplicating.)
Date_____, 19____ Day M T W Th F S Sn Time_____m.
(Circle one)
Place _____
Kind of meeting: Regular ( ) Special ( ) Other _____
President Present ( ) Substitute _____
Secretary Present ( ) Substitute _____
Quorum Present ( ) Number Present _____
(A list of absentees can be included here.)
Guests: None ( ). _____
Minutes of the Previous Meeting: Approved as Read ( )
Approved as Corrected ( ) Dispensed With ( ) Corrections: _____
_____
Reports of Officers: None ( )
Treasurer's Report: None ( ) To File ( ) Attached ( )
Balance on Hand: _____ Bills: _____
_____
Correspondence: None ( ) Items: _____
_____
Other: _____
_____
Reports of Boards: None ( )
_____ by _____
To File ( ) Attached ( ) To Enter in Minutes ( ) Other
Action: _____
_____
_____ by _____
To File ( ) Attached ( ) To Enter in Minutes ( ) Other
Action: _____
_____
(Repeat if the organization has more than one board.)
Reports of Standing Committees: None ( )
(Repeat to allow for the usual number of Standing Committees reporting at one meeting.)
Reports of Special Committee: None ( )
_____ by _____
To File ( ) Attached ( ) To Enter in Minutes ( ) Other
Action: _____

_____
Special Orders: None ( )
_____
_____
Unfinished Business and General Orders: None ( )
_____
Action: _____
_____
Action: _____
_____
Action: _____
New Business: None ( )
"that _____
_____ by _____
Seconded ( ) by _____ Carried ( ) Lost
(Optional)
( ) Other Action: _____
_____
(Repeat so that there is one entry frame for each of the average number of main motions made at a meeting.)
Other (Appeals, Points of Order, etc.)
_____
_____
_____
_____
Announcements: None ( )
_____ by _____
_____ by _____
_____ by _____
_____ by _____
Program: None ( )
_____ by _____
Adjournment at_____m., by Chair ( ), On Motion of
_____
_____ Seconded by _____
_____, Secretary
pro tem ( )
Continuations (At the end of an item, write a number and continue here after a corresponding number.)

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Sample Minutes

The regular meeting of the Oak Park Athletic Club was held on Tuesday, April 13, 1999 at 7:30 p.m. at Oak Valley High School. A quorum was present. President Yvonne Smith presided and appointed Jane Rodriguez secretary *pro tem*. The minutes of the previous meeting were approved as corrected.

The treasurer reported a balance on hand of $2,081.97.

Correspondence was read from U. R. Love, President of the Never Enough Tennis Association, and M. T. Hall, Executive Secretary of Oak Park Association.

Ralph Washington reported that the Executive Board was still accepting suggestions for a permanent meeting place.

Gerald Cohen, chairman of the Membership Committee, reported that three candidates have completed the requirements for membership and recommended "that Augusta Kawalsky, Jane Lew, and Ricky Perez be accepted for membership." The recommendation carried and President Smith instructed the corresponding secretary to write each candidate a letter inviting him to membership.

Bill Stevenson, chairman of the committee to which the motion to host a city swim meet for tots next summer was referred, recommended the following resolution: "*Resolved*, that the Oak Park Athletic Club host a city swim meet for tots two to six on July 22, 1999." The resolution carried.

The motion concerning the payment of the tennis team's travel expenses, postponed from the previous meeting, was taken up. The amendment to add "not to exceed $100" after "team" carried. The motion was adopted as follows: "that the Athletic Club pay the travel expenses of the tennis team not to exceed $100."

Eric Swenson moved "that the Club sell refreshments at the Little League games at Oak Park to help finance the tot swim meet." The motion was seconded. Roy Harris moved that the motion be referred to the Ways and Means Committee and reported on at the next meeting. The motion to postpone was seconded and carried.

An appeal was made from the decision of the chair that an amendment to the refreshment sale motion was not in order. The chair noted that the motion had been referred to a committee; therefore, the committee, rather than the club membership, was charged with its consideration until the motion was reported on next week. The chair further noted that an amendment could be proposed next week or suggested to one of the committee members. The decision of the chair was sustained.

Margaret Yoshimura moved "that a committee of three appointed by the chair investigate suitable trophies for the tot swim meet." The motion was seconded and carried. The president appointed Margaret Yoshimura, chairman, Bill Stevenson, and Leslie Ray.

Dave Rico announced that the Ways and Means Committee would meet tomorrow at 7:45 a.m. in the student lounge and invited interested club members to attend.

President Smith announced that the next meeting would be held Tuesday at the Oak Park Club House.

Jim DeLong introduced the speaker, Kevin O'Toole, who presented a slide show titled "Hurling: The Head-Strong Irish Sport."

The meeting adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

/s/ Jane Rodriguez
Secretary pro tem

4. The Main Motion

"Make a remark," said the Red Queen. "It's ridiculous to leave all the conversation to the pudding!"

Knowing how to make a main motion is to organization membership what knowing how to hold the club is to golf. It is one of the most essential skills and, without it, an individual can't successfully participate. Like the golf grip, motion-making skills seem awkward at first. But with practice, the techniques become natural and automatic.

A main motion introduces business to the organization. Most items considered under the heading New Business are main motions, but main motions are not limited to that category.

There is a variety of motions, and some of them rank higher than others. Main motions are the lowest ranking of all, the "buck privates" in our motion hierarchy. This does not mean that they aren't important. Rather, they rank lowest so that every means can be used to perfect the motion and to move it along without infringing on the rights of the members.

Obtaining the Floor

No matter what major parliamentary authority you use, the motion-making procedure is the same: the member obtains the floor, the motion is brought before the organization, and the motion is considered.

As one workshop student observed, parliamentary procedure is all furniture: the chair gives someone the floor, he moves, and the motion may be tabled.

We have already discussed that "the chair" is another term used to emphasize the impartiality of the presiding officer. Having the floor means that a member has the right to speak before the other members.

Two actions are necessary to obtain the floor. First, when no business is being considered, the member rises and addresses the chair with, "Mister President," "Madam Chairman," or a similar title. In a small board or committee or in a very small organization this formality may be modified by raising the hand and saying, "Mister Chairman," or even making the motion without preliminaries. In a large group, however, these informal practices lead to confusion.

After the member rises and addresses the chair, the chair recognizes him by giving some signal to the member who wants to speak. The chair might nod, say the member's first name, or, in a larger organization, say, "The chair recognizes Mr. Harris."

Bringing a Motion Before the Organization

Three actions bring the motion before the organization. First, the member makes the motion as soon as he is recognized by the chair. Almost all main motions should begin with the words, "I move." For example, a member of the Oak Park Athletic Club might say, "I move that the Club hold a fund-raising activity to earn money for the travel fund."

It is a good idea for a member to write out his motion in full and give a copy of it to the secretary. Writing out the motion helps the maker develop a precise motion, helps the secretary to record it verbatim, and helps the chair to state it correctly.

But many motions are made suddenly when an idea occurs to a member during the meeting. If the motion is poorly phrased, the presiding officer should ask the member to clarify it and help him do so if he asks for help or appears to want it. A diplomatic way to handle the situation is to preface a better phrasing of the motion with a question like, "Does the member mean . . . ?" or a similar inquiry. The presiding officer must not force his corrections on the member, however, and he certainly shouldn't change the intent of the member's motion. It is better to have too little than too much intervention by the chair in the making of a motion.

The motion maker and the presiding officer must take care that the motion is stated positively. That is, it must have no negative words in it like "no" and "not." With positive statements, those in favor of the action simply vote "yes" on the motion; those opposed to the action simply vote no. Confusion often results when a motion is stated negatively. For example, if the motion were "that Oak Park Athletic Club should *not* have a fund-raising activity," those in *favor* of the fund raising would oppose the motion and those *opposed* to the fund raising would favor the motion. Such confusion must be avoided if organizations are to work efficiently.

Until the motion is formally stated by the chair, the maker or other members can offer changes.

The second action in bringing a main motion before the organization is its "second" by another member. A second shows that more than one member is interested in having the motion considered. No formal address and recognition is required. A member remains seated and says, "I second the motion," or just "Second." One second is all that is required. "Thirds" or more are never in order. In committees and small boards, seconds to motions are not required.

If there is no second to the motion, the motion "dies." The chair says, "The motion dies for lack of a second," and goes on to the next item of business. Motions that "die" in this way are not recorded in the minutes.

The last action in bringing a motion before the organization is its statement by the chair. The presiding officer will say, "It has been moved and seconded that . . ." followed by the motion. For example: "It has been moved and seconded that the club hold a fund-raising activity to earn money for the travel fund."

Now the motion may be considered by the organization. Until the statement by the chair, the motion belonged to its maker. He could change it or even withdraw it. But when the motion is stated by the chair, it becomes the property of the organization. Changes in it or its withdrawal must have the approval of the members.

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Considering the Motion

Immediately following its statement by the chair, the motion should enter its consideration phase. The first step is discussion or debate. The chair asks, "Is there any discussion?"

An old way for the chair to announce discussion was to ask, "Are you ready for the question?" Where this phrase is used today, some members, unfortunately, may respond, "Question!" which they mistakenly believe forces the motion to an immediate vote. However, no member or group of members has the right to stop discussion before the majority is ready to do so. The presiding officer should ignore cries of "Question!" If you are not presiding and the chair interprets "Question!" to mean "vote now," you can rise to a Point of Order or a Parliamentary Inquiry. We'll discuss both of these motions in Chapter 9.

Another term for discussing a motion is to debate it. Instead of the competitive debate used in multi-school tournaments and other speech contests, debate in parliamentary terms is really discussion. The pros and cons of the action the motion proposes are stated informally.

Rules of Debate

There are time limits and courtesies in debating motions. Unless an organization makes its own rule, common parliamentary law says each speaker has the right to speak once for ten minutes on each motion and to make a second speech for ten minutes on the same motion if everyone else has had an opportunity to speak once. A third speech is not permitted unless the club votes to hear it.

The thought of listening to people speak once and sometimes twice for ten minutes on a motion can be discouraging. Fortunately, our fellow members usually don't speak that long. But don't we often have members in our organizations who speak three times or more on the same motion, often while other people are trying to get the floor to speak for the first time? This unlimited debate is time-consuming,

and it denies the right of discussion to other members.

If a club doesn't want ten-minute speeches, it should set other time limits in its special rules of order. New time limits should permit full discussion, however, and not restrict the members to impossible limits like thirty seconds.

Another way to limit or extend debate is by a subsidiary motion described in Chapter 7. By this motion, two-thirds of those voting may decrease the number of speeches per person, decrease the number of minutes per speech, or extend either or both.

In addition to keeping track of the length and number of speeches per person, the presiding officer should try to alternate speakers from one side of the question to the other. The first person to be recognized in discussion is the maker of the motion. The chair should look in his direction when he asks, "Is there any discussion?" If the maker of the motion rises and addresses the chair, he should be recognized first even though others are rising and addressing the chair, too. After the first speech, the chair should recognize a person who, he thinks, is opposed to the motion. Of course, this kind of alternating discussion is not always possible, for the members' preferences are not always known to the chair. Also, there are often more speakers on one side of the motion than on the other.

During this discussion period, many other motions can be made to help perfect the main motion, move it along, or recognize the rights of the members. These motions are covered in later chapters.

Discussion or debate in committees and boards of 12 or less has no limits on the number of minutes per speech or the number of speeches per person. The chair may participate in debate and even make a motion. The presiding officer of the parent organization, however, can't speak in debate unless he relinquishes the chair while the motion is being considered.

Also, in a committee or a small board, there may be discussion before a motion is made. Usually, this practice is too time-consuming for the whole organization. With the larger group, discussion should follow the stating of the motion, not precede it.

From Debate to Voting

"You should learn not to make personal remarks," Alice said with some severity; "it's very rude."

". . . Nobody asked your opinion," said Alice.

"Who's making personal remarks now?" the Hatter asked triumphantly.

One of the most fundamental rules of discussion is that the members must confine their remarks to the motion. Personal remarks are never in order. If a member makes such a remark, the chair should tap the gavel once and remind the member that he may speak only on the motion.

After there are no more responses to the chair's question, "Is there any further discussion?" the chair repeats the motion again and puts it to a vote (the second step in the motion's consideration).

Main motions are passed or carried by majority vote. The vote is usually taken by voice. When it is clear that there is no further discussion, the chair says, "The question is on the motion that . . ." followed by the exact words of the motion. He continues, "All those in favor of the motion, say aye." He pauses and listens to the response, then says, "Those opposed, say no." He pauses and listens to the negative response. If he is sure that one side or the other has won, he is ready to go on to the next and last step.

The last step in the consideration of the motion is the announcement of the vote and its result. Most presiding officers announce which side won. For example: "The ayes have it and the motion is carried," or "The noes have it and the motion is defeated."

Some presiding officers don't "follow through" and state what the result of the win or loss will be. Suppose the motion were "that the Oak Park Athletic Club should have a

fund-raising activity." If it won, the chair should say, "The ayes have it; the motion carried and the Club will have a fund-raising activity." Sometimes it sounds like the motion is repeated over and over again, but the members have a right to know what is going on at all times.

We can summarize the steps in making a main motion as follows: 1) the member rises and addresses the chair, 2) the chair recognizes the member, 3) the member makes the motion, 4) another member seconds the motion, 5) the chair states the motion, 6) the members debate the motion, 7) the chair puts the motion to a vote, and 8) the chair announces the vote and its result.

Resolutions

Resolutions are really only main motions in formal dress. They follow the same eight steps that we have discussed above, but the business proposed is preceded with the word "Resolved" rather than "I move."

Resolutions are often stated at the end of committee reports. Resolutions may be moved during New Business, too, by any member. Usually, they are written before the meeting, and a copy is given to the secretary. They are often prefaced by "Whereas," but this practice is being phased out because the points made in lengthy prefaces can usually be stated in debate. There may be times, however, when a formal resolution with a preamble (the "whereas" clauses) is still the best way to introduce business.

Incidental Main Motions

Incidental motions are those that arise out of the business being conducted. There is another group of motions with a similar name, *incidental main motions*.

An incidental main motion is made when no other business is being considered or "pending." Unlike the original main motions, the incidental main motion is concerned with procedure and does not bring new business to the organization. Among the incidental main motions are these: Adjourn, Recess, Amend Something Previously Adopted, and Refer to a Committee. We will examine motions like these in later chapters, but they are made while a main motion is still pending. Generally, incidental main motions are actions that become main motions only because no other main motion is on the floor.

Inci

5. Methods of Voting

"Suppose we change the subject," the March Hare interrupted, yawning, "I'm getting tired of this. I vote the young lady tells us a story."

Democracy, a form of government in which the people rule, cannot function without the people having and exercising the right to vote. We have gradually extended this idea of "people power" into all segments of our society. Thus, we vote not only in governmental elections, but in union or professional organizations, in neighborhood associations, in church councils, and in millions of clubs and societies. In fact, voting is such a familiar experience that we usually accept its mechanics without question, concentrating only on the contest the vote decides. To protect our right to vote and to exercise it correctly, we also need to know something about the mechanics of voting.

Majority vote, two-thirds vote, and *plurality vote* are numerical descriptions of voting. *Voice vote, rising vote, show of hands, ballot vote, machine vote, roll call, absentee vote,* and *general consent* are all means of registering a vote. The phrase "two-thirds roll call vote" describes both the numerical requirement and the means.

Majority Vote

In a democratic institution, most decisions are made by a majority—more than half. No specific number is used to define a majority (such as fifty-one per cent or one more than half). One reason is that sometimes, particularly in conventions, voters may share one vote so that it is possible to have fractions of a vote cast. A majority, then, could be any fraction of a vote over half of the votes cast.

Occasionally, we hear the term "simple majority." This term means a majority, nothing else.

Another common term is "majority of the votes cast," which means the majority of votes, not the majority of voting members present. People who attend meetings but do not vote may allow fewer than half of the members attending to make the decisions for the whole organization. There is a right on the part of the individual not to vote. Organizations must be very careful not to require their members to vote or, if they do, to limit that requirement only to the most serious questions.

A "majority of the membership" is another term that is used when motions like those amending something previously adopted or postponing an event previously scheduled are considered. Both of these motions may be passed by any of three kinds of vote: a majority (if notice of the motion was previously given), two-thirds, or a majority of the entire membership.

Let's suppose that the Oak Park Athletic Club schedules a dance for Saturday, February 13. But on February 3, the day after the regular meeting, the committee is advised that the musicians can't come. The committee knows that they can't get another band on such short notice, but they agree that they don't want recorded music either. So at the regular meeting on February 9, the committee recommends that the dance be cancelled.

Since previous notice of this recommendation could not be given at the February 2 meeting, more than a majority of the votes are required for the motion to pass. Eighty-seven out of a total of 100 members are attending this meeting. If all of the members attending vote, a two-thirds vote will be 58. But a majority of the entire membership of 100 is 51. Fifty-one votes, not 58, will carry the recommendation.

If there is a majority, more than half, there must also be a minority, less than half. Today the term minority is used to refer to specific groups of people in the society as a whole. In voting, the majority and the minority are not composed of specific groups of people in the organization. During a meeting, each member may vote with the majority some of the time and with the minority at other times. It is also possible that no two members attending a meeting will have identical voting records.

Two-Thirds Vote

The two-thirds vote, illustrated in the example above, is simply two-thirds of the votes cast. It's important to note that a small minority—just one vote more than one third—can defeat a motion that requires approval by two-thirds of the votes cast.

Unlike the majority vote, the two-thirds vote cannot be a voice vote. The chair must be able to determine whether or not at least two-thirds actually voted for the motion. Therefore, two-thirds votes should be done by ballot, by rising, or by some other visible means.

What kinds of actions require a two-thirds vote? In general, a two-thirds vote is required to pass any measure that interferes with the rights of the members.

A good example of the distinction between majority and two-thirds votes is found in the motions relating to nominations. Because the motion to *close nominations* interferes with the right of members to make further nominations, it requires a two-thirds vote to pass. On the other hand, the motion to *re-open nominations* requires only a majority vote to pass because it is restoring the members' right to nominate.

Plurality Vote

A plurality is the greatest number of votes for a candidate or a measure in a contest of three or more choices. It is possible, then, for a plurality to be less than a majority. If a majority vote is required, a plurality less than a majority cannot elect. Student bodies familiar with run-off elections might be tempted to elect officers by plurality rather than majority vote. It is unwise and really undemocratic to elect any person or pass any measure that receives less than half of the votes cast.

Voice Vote

The Latin term for this voting procedure is "viva voce," and several leading parliamentary authorities use the same term. Whatever the name, this vote is the familiar *aye* (pronounced "I") and *no* vote.

Rising Vote

Except in very small organizations, any two-thirds vote should be a rising vote. The chair may judge this vote by sight, unless the vote is close. Then a wise president will count the vote and may even ask the secretary or other members to assist him with the count.

Any member may move that a vote be counted, however. If the motion is seconded and carried by a majority, the vote in question must be taken over again and counted. Even though the original vote may have been by voice, the counted vote should be a rising vote, except in small organizations.

A rising vote, but not a counted one, can be demanded by a single member with a motion called Division of the Assembly. If a member doubts the result of a voice vote as it has been announced by the chair, he may immediately call "Division!" No second is required. The chair says, "Division has been called for," and immediately takes the vote again, this time asking the members to rise. No matter how small the organization is, a vote in response to Division of the Assembly should be a rising vote.

In all of these instances, the chair calls for a rising vote in this way: "All those in favor of the motion please rise." He pauses and observes the members standing and may count or have others help count the members standing. Then he says, "Please be seated." After a pause long enough for the standing members to resume their seats, he says, "All those opposed to the motion please rise." These members are observed or counted. Then he says, "Please be seated." When these members have resumed their seats, he announces the vote and its result like this: "There are two-thirds in the affirmative and the motion is adopted." Or, "There are less than two-thirds in the affirmative and the motion is lost."

At this point, a member who doubts the chair's accuracy may move that the vote be counted. If the vote is counted, the chair says, "There are sixty-six in the affirmative and thirty-three in the negative. The motion is adopted."

Show of Hands

Voting by raising a hand is an alternative to the voice vote in some clubs and, if the organization is small, it can be an alternative to the standing vote. If it is difficult for the presiding officer to judge the majority or count the raised hands quickly, the organization is too large for this voting method.

The chair calls for the vote by saying, "All those in favor of the motion please raise the right hand." Then after a pause he says, "Please lower your hands," or, "Thank you." Continuing, he says, "All those opposed to the motion please raise the right hand." He pauses, thanks the group, and announces the vote and its result.

Ballot

A vote by ballot not only enables us to exercise our right to vote but also to enjoy the right of keeping our preferences secret. Of course, it would be far too time-consuming if organizations used the ballot to decide every issue. The ballot is usually reserved for elections or some other important contest in which the members wish to keep their preferences secret.

A ballot can be any piece of paper on which the member writes his choice. It does not have to be a printed form prepared in advance.

An organization may wish to recess while the members mark their ballots, to set times when the polls open and close, or make other rules concerning the balloting.

The chair must appoint honest and accurate tellers to distribute, collect, and count the ballots and report the vote. Although who or what won will be obvious from the tellers' report, it is the chair who announces the result of the vote or who won.

Tellers usually use a tally sheet and prepare a teller's report. The forms are shown in detail in the various parliamentary authorities.

Ballots should be kept until there is no possibility that they may be recounted; then they should be destroyed. It is neither wise nor fair to destroy ballots immediately following an election, particularly if there is a close contest or any doubt about the accuracy of the count.

If the bylaws require a vote by ballot for the election of officers or some other contest, no other kind of vote should be substituted—even if there is only one candidate. Since it is time-consuming to use a ballot for an election that has only one candidate, the bylaws should contain a provision which permits the organization to cast the electing ballot for that office. However, this practice prevents members from writing in the names of other members for that office.

The report of the nominating committee is not a ballot, and it should not be made to serve as one. Sometimes we hear members move that the secretary cast a "white ballot" for the nominees. This practice denies the members their right to make additional nominations and to vote for a candidate in each office.

Machine Vote

The machine vote is really a mechanical version of the ballot vote. Some large student bodies use voting machines in their general elections. Using machines not only gives students practical preparation for voting in federal, state, and local elections, but it also provides the students with a fast and accurate means for counting the vote.

Roll Call

Unlike the ballot, which insures the secrecy of the vote, the roll call vote records just how the members voted. This

means of voting should not be used unless the members are representatives of other people who are entitled to know how their elected agents voted.

Absentee Vote

A vote by mail may be provided for by organizations whose members are scattered over a large geographical area. The vote may be secret or not, depending on the provisions in the organization's bylaws.

A similar provision is the vote by proxy. Here another member casts votes for the member. Proxy voting is usually limited to stock corporations. Neither the vote by mail nor the vote by proxy have practical applications for in-school organizations.

General Consent

A great deal of time is saved in meetings by the use of general consent. General consent is used in the approval of the minutes when they are accepted as read. The chair says, "You have heard the reading of the minutes. Are there any corrections?" He pauses and then says, "If there are no corrections, the minutes are approved as read." By remaining silent, the members have given their consent to approving the minutes as read.

During the debate phase of the consideration of a motion, the chair says, "Is there any discussion?" Or, "Is there any further discussion?" When there is no response to this question, the chair assumes that debate has ceased (by general consent) and he puts the question to a vote.

On other occasions, the chair may say, "If there is no objection," a particular action may take place. For example, "If there is no objection, the member may withdraw the motion."

Imagine how much time would be taken up if minutes had to be approved each time by vote, if all debate was ended by vote, and if every unopposed action had to be decided by vote.

But general consent cannot be used to pass a main motion, elect officers, or decide other important issues. It is used when no opposition is apparent to a decision on a *procedural* matter. If someone objects, however, a vote must be taken by voice or other appropriate means.

Some parliamentary authorities, including *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised*, also call this means of voting unanimous consent. The better term is general consent, however, because some of the silent majority may truly object to the action but, for some reason, refrain from voicing their opposition.

6. Nominations and Elections

"Well, this is grand!" said Alice. "I never expected I should be a Queen so soon!"

The right to nominate and elect office holders is fundamental to a democratic organization.

Most of us have nominated and elected officers since our earliest school days. But, in the process, we may have picked up a few practices that are unnecessary or that even obstruct the democratic election process.

Nominations From the Floor

One of the most familiar nominating procedures is making nominations from the floor. The chair says, "nominations are open for the office of president," and the members then nominate or name candidates for the office. In most organizations, it is not necessary for members to be recognized in order to make a nomination. In fact, they need not rise unless the group is large. Each member can remain seated and name his candidate without preliminaries, for example, "I nominate Yvonne Smith." Of course, members must be courteous and speak one at a time.

At conventions or in some student governments, it is necessary to be more formal and receive recognition before a nomination is made. Also, the members making nominations may be expected to give a short speech stating the candidate's virtues and qualifications for the office. Nominating speeches are particularly appropriate in an organization too large for all members to know each other.

In most organizations, nominations do not require a second. We see seconding speeches at political and other large conventions, but they are more of a courtesy than a necessity. Seconds to nominations perform no useful function in most of our organizations.

Before a member makes a nomination, he should determine that the person he wants to nominate will serve. This courtesy saves a great deal of time, effort and possibly the feelings of the nominator or the reluctant nominee.

Nominations from the floor can be a fast-moving process if the presiding officer and the members follow the rules.

By Committee

Many organizations provide for a nominating committee in their bylaws. The committee studies the duties of the officers and tries to choose the best possible candidate for each office. The bylaws may require that the committee have the consent of the potential nominees before their names can be officially proposed. But even if the bylaws do not require it, the committee should be sure each nominee it proposes is willing to stand for election.

Usually, the nominating committee makes its report at the regular meeting preceding the one during which the election will be held. Following the committee report, the presiding officer calls for further nominations from the floor. He says, for example, "Ralph Washington is nominated for president by the nominating committee. Are there any further nominations for president?" Then the nominations follow the procedure discussed above in nominations from the floor.

The nominating committee's report is not the electing ballot. Under no circumstances should the organization merely hear the report of the nominating committee, then instruct the secretary to cast a ballot for it.

The presiding officer must ask for nominations. Then, if there are no further nominations and the bylaws so provide, the organization may vote to have the secretary cast the electing ballot, in effect having him vote for all the members attending the meeting.

The use of a nominating committee should be specified in the bylaws. The number of members and how they are to be selected should also be stated. The presiding officer should not be given the option of appointing the committee since this power could perpetuate control of the organization by a small, select group.

Also, members of the nominating committee are not denied the right to be nominees. It might be better form, however, to have the member nominated from the floor.

By Ballot

Sometimes organizations make nominations by ballot. In this process, the members list the names of their choices for the various offices. Everyone receiving at least one "vote" becomes a nominee and the election is a contest among them. Unless the majority votes to do so, no nominations are made from the floor, because all members have had a chance to nominate by ballot.

This system is similar to a primary election. It has advantages for some organizations, but for most clubs the process of double balloting is too time-consuming.

By Mail

Nominating by mail is particularly valuable to organizations whose members are spread over a wide geographical area. It is really a form of nominating by ballot and can be conducted in the same way.

Self-Nominations

If a citizen wishes to run for a public office, he usually files papers registering his candidacy. A presidential hopeful, too, allows his name to be entered in the primaries of various states, although he may wait to announce that he is running for office. In fact, most elected officials in federal, state, and local governments started on their way to office by publicly announcing that they were interested in having the job.

Similar provisions for self-nominations are often provided by student governments. Students who are interested in becoming candidates register and may have to obtain a certain number of signatures to quality as candidates.

In other organizations, self-nominations are not as frequent. Most of the time, a person interested in an office will have a friend nominate him. But there is certainly nothing out of order in a person's nominating himself from the floor or by ballot.

By the Chair (Special Committees)

The chair does not usually make any nominations for office. But in the case of special committees, the chair may be asked to propose members.

Let us suppose, for example, Bill Stevenson has just moved, "that the Oak Park Athletic Club host a swim meet for tots next summer." It is seconded and stated by the chair. As members speak for and against the motion, other members realize that this motion requires study. Can tots really perform in a meet? What ages should be included? Would the club's insurance cover all liabilities? Would the pool be available on a suitable day?

Obviously, these questions must be answered before a decision can be made, but the members can't supply the answers without investigation. One member moves, "that the motion be referred to a special committee." The motion is seconded. The chair states the motion and asks for discussion. No one responds, then the chair asks, "How many members should be on this committee?"

Another member says, "I move to amend the motion by adding the words 'of five' after 'committee'." The amendment is seconded and approved.

The chair asks for further discussion on the amended motion. There is no response. Then the chair asks, "How shall the committee be selected?" Although there are several possibilities, one member believes that the chair is in the best position to know who should serve on the committee. He says, "I move to amend the motion by adding the words, 'nominated by the chair' after the word 'five'." The amendment is seconded and approved. The twice-amended motion is now "that the motion be referred to a special committee of five appointed by the chair." After further

discussion, the motion is stated by the chair, voted upon, and approved.

Now the chair makes his nominations. The first-named person is really being nominated for the chairmanship of the committee. Bill Stevenson, the maker of the main motion, should at least be nominated to serve on the committee, and, if he is qualified, he should be nominated to serve as committee chairman. The chair decides to name Bill first. Four more members must be nominated.

If the committee is being formed to carry out an order of the organization, to be an action committee, the chair would nominate only those people who favored the action. But since this is to be a study committee, the chair nominates people who are probably not in favor of the tots' swim meet as well as people who are in favor of it. In this way, the organization can be sure that both sides of the question will be examined by the committee. The chair remembers that two people had spoken against the motion. He nominates those people and then two others that he knows are in favor of it.

After giving Bill Stevenson's name first as chairman and naming the other four members, the chair puts the nominations to a vote as follows, "Should these persons constitute the committee? All those in favor say aye." He continues through the process of voting by voice.

On other occasions, the motion to create a committee will include the words "appointed by the chair." In those instances, the chair names the members of the committee, but the members do not vote to approve them. The chair must name the committee right away, however, unless he has the approval of the organization to appoint them at a later time. In that case, the approval should also be given for the committee to function following its appointment. Otherwise, the committee technically can't begin its work until the appointment of its members has been announced to the organization's membership.

This process may seem too complicated for the ordinary club, but it must be remembered that the presiding officer cannot create a committee on his own. He must first have that power given to him by the organization.

Time can be saved if the motion to refer a matter to a special committee includes the number of people on the committee and how they should be selected.

Closing Nominations

A vote to close nominations requires a two-thirds vote to approve, because the right of the members to nominate is being limited. To close nominations, the member rises and addresses the chair. After he is recognized, he says, "I move that the nominations for president be closed." If there is a second, the chair states the motion and puts it to a vote immediately. No discussion is permitted because the motion to close nominations is not debatable. A rising vote is taken if the group is large; then the chair announces the vote and its result.

All these actions take time. If it is apparent that all of the nominations have been made or that only a few are left, it is better to let the nominations end by general consent rather than go through the motion process.

The procedure for closing nominations by general consent is as follows: The chair says, "Are there any further nominations for the office of president?" He pauses and then says, "If not," (pause) "the nominations are closed."

Re-Opening Nominations

Because re-opening nominations restores the members' right to nominate, only a majority vote is required to pass the motion.

A member who wishes to make a nomination after they are closed says, "I move that the nominations for president be re-opened." If the motion is seconded, the chair states it and puts it to a vote immediately. Obviously, it is too late to re-open nominations once the voting begins.

Election By Ballot

The bylaws of many organizations provide for election of officers by ballot. No other method of voting can be substituted in these circumstances. The ballot vote was discussed in the preceding chapter.

Election By Roll Call

We watch excitedly as the roll is called in a political convention and the winner is proclaimed the candidate for his party. But in most organizations, electing by roll call would usually be unnecessarily time-consuming, and it would deny the members their right to vote in secret.

Election By Voice

The voice vote can be used for the selection of members of a committee and even the election of officers, if the bylaws permit it. The members cannot vote in secret in this process; so if secrecy is desired, the vote should be taken by ballot.

The chair takes the voice vote this way: "All those in favor of Yvonne Smith for president, please say aye." He pauses to listen to the response and then continues, "All those opposed to Yvonne Smith for president, please say no." Or, "All those opposed, say no." The chair takes care to say "for president" when the candidate's name is used; otherwise the process can be insulting and ridiculous as the members vote for or against other members, not on their election to office.

One interesting facet of the voice vote process is that, once a candidate receives a majority, any remaining candidates for that office are not voted upon. Although this rule may seem undemocratic at first, it is really justifiable because the purpose of the election is to find the majority's choice. Putting candidates through the voice vote process after the choice of the majority has been made serves no purpose and may embarrass candidates who will receive few, if any, votes.

Election By General Consent

If there is only one candidate for each office and the bylaws permit it, the candidates can be elected by general consent. The chair would say after the close of nominations, "If there is no objection, the candidates will be elected." If there is no response, he announces, "Since there is no objection, the candidates are elected," and then reads the list of the new officers.

7. Subsidiary Motions

"Besides, that's not a regular rule; you invented it just now."

"It's the oldest rule in the book," said the King.

"Then it ought to be Number One," said Alice.

Did you notice how many motions were on the floor at once in the preceding example concerning the tot swim meet? Bill Stevenson had made the main motion "that the Oak Park Athletic Club host a swim meet for tots next summer." After it was seconded and stated by the chair, another member moved, "that the motion be referred to a special committee." This motion, too, was seconded and stated by the chair. Then, at the prompting of the chair, a third member moved "to amend the motion by adding the words 'of five' after 'committee'." At one time, then, there were three motions on the floor.

Since our elementary school days, we have been taught that there should be only one motion on the floor at a time. This principle is true—as long as it refers to main motions. In the example above, we have only one main motion on the floor. The motion to refer a matter to a committee and the motion to amend are both examples of *subsidiary* motions.

Besides main motions, there are a number of motions called *secondary motions*. These, in turn, can be divided into related groups. One of these groups is called *subsidiary motions*.

What Is a Subsidiary Motion?

Subsidiary motions help the organization to dispose of a main motion. Without them, the only actions an organization could take on a main motion would be either to approve it or defeat it exactly as it was stated by the chair. Also, no other main motion could be introduced until the preceding one had been either approved or defeated.

We can see immediately that it is desirable to amend some motions, to refer others to committee, to postpone consideration of the motion to another meeting, and to lay aside a motion for a few minutes so that something more pressing may be discussed. All of the motions allowing these operations are subsidiary motions.

It is also necessary to be able to limit, extend, or even stop debate on a motion. The motions to do these things are also subsidiary.

Ranking Subsidiary Motions

There are seven classes of subsidiary motions and, at least in theory, a motion from each of these can be "attached" to a main motion while it is pending or on the floor.

Without some established precedence or rank for these motions, chaos could result. Suppose, for example, that the members vote to refer a main motion to a committee. Obviously, the members want the committee to study the motion further, not to try to study or perfect the motion at this meeting. It should be out of order, then, to move an amendment immediately after the members vote to refer the motion to a committee.

Or, suppose time is running short and the motion should be put to a vote immediately. A motion to stop debate, then, should take precedence over any other motion that would only add to the length of the discussion.

These problems are solved by giving each class of subsidiary motions a rank in relation to all the others. They are, from lowest to highest: Postpone Indefinitely, Amend, Commit or Refer to a Committee, Postpone to a Certain Time, Limit or Extend Debate, Previous Question or Stop Debate, and Lay on the Table.

None of the subsidiary motions can be moved while another member has the floor, and all of them must be seconded. Unless otherwise indicated, they are approved by a majority vote.

Presiding officers also need to know the order of precedence or have it close at hand during the meeting. The mo-

tions are put to a vote from the highest-ranking to the lowest-ranking motion. Or, they are voted on in the reverse of the order in which they were made.

Postpone Indefinitely

It may seem unnecessary to have a way to postpone the main motion indefinitely or "forever." Why not just defeat the main motion when it is put to a vote? The reason is that the organization may not wish to spend time on a question—or the question may be putting the club in an embarrassing situation. The motion to postpone indefinitely gives the majority a good way to dispose of unwanted main motions.

Suppose that a motion is made and seconded to support the charity drive of another organization. If the motion is defeated, it might appear that the organization is not in sympathy with the goals and purposes of the drive. But in fact, the organization has a fund drive of its own for an equally worthy charity.

Most members feel that the club's efforts should go to its own charitable project. After the main motion has been stated and is being discussed, a member should say (after recognition), "I move to postpone this motion indefinitely." If it is seconded, the chair states, "it has been moved and seconded to postpone the motion indefinitely. Is there any discussion?" If the motion to postpone is approved, the chair says, "The ayes have it, the motion is carried and the motion to support the charity fund raising is postponed indefinitely."

Postponing a motion indefinitely does not mean that a similar motion cannot be moved at a later meeting. The motion cannot be made at the same meeting, however, unless the majority agrees to the reconsideration.

In addition to saving the club time and embarrassment, the motion to postpone indefinitely serves two other useful functions. Debate on the motion can go into the merits of the main motion, so the motion to postpone indefinitely provides members who have already spoken their limit on the main motion a chance to speak on the question again.

Another use of the motion to postpone indefinitely is to give members opposed to the main motion a chance to test their strength. Suppose that the main motion "that the Club have a rummage sale on the first Saturday of May" has been seconded and stated by the chair.

During the discussion, only a few people speak on the motion, but one member thinks a May rummage sale will take too much time in one of the busiest months of the year. He moves then "that the motion be postponed indefinitely." It is seconded.

If the motion to postpone is approved, the rummage sale will not be held. But even if the motion to postpone indefinitely is lost, the members against the rummage sale can see how many more votes they need to defeat the main motion and then can make plans to convince members to join them. Obviously, if the main motion had come to a vote, it would have been approved but now there is still a chance to defeat it.

Postpone indefinitely ranks seventh or lowest among the subsidiary motions. It takes precedence only over a main motion.

Amend

Examples in this book and experiences in real meetings show that some motions must be amended. The motion to amend ranks sixth in the order of subsidiary motions.

Before a main motion is stated by the chair, it belongs to its maker, and he can change it even if the person who seconds disagrees. But once a main motion has been stated by the chair, it belongs to the organization and only the members may decide how the motion will be changed.

There are three basic ways to change a motion. It can be amended by adding words at the end of the motion, by inserting words into the motion, or by striking words out of the motion. There is a combination of the last two also, to strike out words and insert others.

Chapter 3 included an example of adding words to a motion. Jane Rodriguez moved "that the Athletic Club pay the travel expenses of the tennis team." The motion was seconded and stated. Then an amendment was offered to add "not to exceed $100" after the word "team." Clearly, the club was wise to add words that set a limit on the expenditures.

A second basic method used to amend motions is to insert words into the motion. Margaret Yoshimura moved "that a committee of three appointed by the chair investigate suitable trophies for the tot swim meet." If a member was concerned that no time was mentioned for the committee to report its findings to the organization, he could move "to amend the motion by inserting between the words 'investigate' and 'suitable' the words 'and report next meeting on'." If that amendment passed, the main motion would then be "that a committee of three appointed by the chair investigate and report next meeting on suitable trophies for the tot swim meet."

Let's look at an example of the third method, striking out words. Eric Swenson made the motion "that the Club sell refreshments at the Little League games at Oak Park to help finance the tot swim meet." It was seconded and stated by the chair. Suppose that one member thought the idea was good, but questioned limiting it to games played at Oak Park. He would move "to amend the motion by striking out the words 'at Oak Park.' If the amendment passed, the motion would then be "that the Club sell refreshments at the Little League games to help finance the tot swim meet."

Let's imagine further that another member also likes the idea of the fund-raising, but he doesn't think the money raised should be tied exclusively to financing the tot swim meet. He would move "to amend the motion by striking out the words 'to help finance the tot swim meet'."

Both these primary amendments can be made to the main motion, but they must be considered one at a time. In other words, one primary amendment must be voted upon before the other can be moved. A primary amendment makes changes in the main motion. And, as you probably have guessed, there are secondary amendments, too. These are amendments to primary amendments or "amendments to amendments."

We'll continue with the striking out method to illustrate secondary amendments. The committee studying the motion to host a tot swim meet made this recommendation, "*Resolved*, that the Oak Park Athletic Club host a city swim meet for tots two to six on July 22, 1999." A primary amendment to this motion could be "to amend the motion by striking out the words 'for tots two to six.'" A secondary amendment could be "to amend the amendment by striking out the words 'for tots.'"

Now let's see what happens. Assuming all motions were seconded, the secondary amendment is voted on first. If it passes, the words "for tots" are then struck from the primary amendment which then reads, "to amend the motion by striking out the words 'two to six.'" If the primary amendment passes, the main motion would be, "*Resolved*, that the Oak Park Athletic Club host a city swim meet for tots on July 22, 1999."

To show how a combination of striking out and inserting works, we'll use the main motion "that the Athletic Club pay the travel expenses of the tennis team not to exceed $100." If someone volunteered to drive the team to its destination, then the money could be used for the team's food and housing expenses. In that event, a member would move "to amend the motion by striking out the word 'travel' and inserting 'living'." If the amendment passed, the motion would be "that the Athletic Club pay the living expenses of the tennis team not to exceed $100."

The amendment to strike out the word "travel" and insert the word "living" is closely related (germane) to the main motion. Amendments *not* germane to the main motion should be declared out of order by the chair. See the section on Appeal in Chapter 9 for an example of an amendment that is not germane.

Sometimes you'll hear the term "substitute amendment". This is really a form of striking out and inserting. It usually refers to a whole sentence, whole paragraph or a whole section. It is handled like any other primary amendment.

Most amendments—to add, to insert, to strike out, to strike out and insert, or to substitute either as primary or secondary amendments—require a majority vote for approval. But if the bylaws are being amended or if some other previously passed action is being amended, a two-thirds vote may be required. Some motions cannot be amended. For example, it would be impossible to amend the motion to postpone indefinitely.

Filling Blanks

Filling Blanks is related to the amendment process, and it can be used to save a great deal of time when several names, numbers, amounts, places, etc. could be stated in the motion. For example, suppose a member moves "that the Club spend no more than $75 for trophies for the tot swim meet." If someone thinks that another amount would be better, he can move "to create a blank by striking out the sum of $75." The motion to create a blank must be seconded and approved by majority vote. Then the members name what they think should be in the blank (similar to the way nominations are made from the floor). When all the suggestions have been made, they are voted on one at a time until one figure receives a majority. Members may vote, then, for more than one suggestion. After a majority agrees on one, the other suggestions are not voted upon and the blank is filled. However, the main motion is still pending and must be acted on.

In addition to creating a blank by a motion, a member may make the main motion with a blank already in it, or the chair may ask for general consent to create a blank in place of the variable in the motion.

Commit or Refer to a Committee

The fifth-ranking subsidiary motion is the one that refers a motion to a committee. A member says, "I move that this motion be referred to the Ways and Means Committee." Or, "I move that a committee of three be appointed by the chair to study this motion."

A motion can be referred to an existing committee, or a special committee can be formed to work on it.

When it refers a motion to a committee by majority vote, the organization is really saying to the committee, "You work on this for us." Until the committee reports, the organization should not do anything with the motion. But if something happens to make it advisable for the organization to discuss the referred motion, it can do so before the committee report. This action is accomplished by the motion to Discharge a Committee which we will discuss in Chapter 10.

It is possible for all of the members attending a meeting to act as a committee. The principle advantage is to permit greater freedom in discussion. Specifically, there are no limits to the number of speeches a member may make. The same advantages may be gained by the subsidiary motion to extend debate which is discussed later in this chapter. But there may be occasions when the organization prefers to "go into committee" to consider a proposed action.

There are three variations of these committees. One is the "committee of the whole," best suited for organizations in which the members attending number 100 or more. The "quasi committee of the whole" is best for groups of 50 to 100 members, and the method to "consider informally" is for small groups of up to fifty. Each type has some different characteristics. Your club's parliamentary authority can provide the details of "committee of the whole" or "quasi committee of the whole."

To "consider a motion informally," a member says, "I move that this question be considered informally." If his motion is seconded and approved by majority vote, the chair says, "The ayes have it, the motion is approved and the question is now open to informal consideration." Then he reminds the members that there is no limit to the number

of times each member may speak on the main motion or its amendments.

The presiding officer of the organization is also the presiding officer during informal consideration. Motions made during informal consideration are recorded in the minutes.

No motion is needed to end informal consideration. It is automatically over when the question discussed under it has been disposed of.

When a motion is referred to a committee, it takes with it any amendments that have been proposed but not disposed of. The amendments are discussed by the committee and are included in its recommendations.

Postpone to a Certain Time

Fourth in the rank of subsidiary motions is the one that postpones a motion to a certain time. A motion can be postponed to another time during the meeting, but it is usually postponed to another day. This subsidiary motion is often called Postpone Definitely.

The advantages of postponing a motion are many. For example, if the meeting is running long, matters that are not pressing can be put off until the next meeting. Motions that need more consideration by the members may be postponed, and members who want to gather more strength for their side of an issue may postpone a pending motion.

During the discussion phase of the motion, a member obtains the floor and says, "I move that this motion be postponed to the next regular meeting." If it is seconded and stated by the chair, debate may go into the merits of postponing the motion, but not on the motion it would postpone. The motion to postpone definitely may also be amended concerning the day or the time to which the main motion may be postponed.

The vote required to approve postponement depends on whether or not the motion to be postponed is made a "special order." There is a category of business called Special Orders, which is considered before Unfinished Business (see Chapter 2). Or, the motion to be postponed can be made a special order for an earlier hour, thereby interrupting the business being considered. Creating a special order would, then, interfere with the rights of the members to finish their discussion, so it must have a two-thirds vote.

A member makes the motion in this way, "I move that the motion be postponed and made a special order for the next meeting," or, "I move that the motion be postponed and made a special order for 7:40 p.m. at the next meeting."

Postponed motions that are *not* designated special orders are considered "general orders" and are taken up in the category of unfinished business and general orders. Only a majority vote is required to postpone a motion that becomes a general order.

Limit or Extend Debate

The third highest ranking subsidiary motions are those limiting or extending debate. We have already noted that common parliamentary law grants each member the right to make one 10-minute speech on each motion and a second 10-minute speech if every other member has had the opportunity to speak once. If members wish to speak for a longer period, or one longer than that set in the special rules of order, they should move and approve a motion to extend debate. Or, if members want to speak more than twice, the motion to extend debate should be used. Decreasing the amount of time per speech or decreasing the number of speeches per member or per motion can be accomplished through the motion to limit debate.

The motions are made like this: "I move that debate be extended on this motion to three 15-minute speeches per person." Or, "I move that debate be closed at 8:00 p.m. and the motion be put to a vote."

Because this motion alters the rights of members in debate, the motions limiting or extending debate require two-thirds votes to pass.

In some organizations like legislative bodies, members

may yield or give their unused debate time to other members. This arrangement must be stipulated in an organization's bylaws.

If a speaker has spoken 10 minutes and has just a minute or so left to complete his remarks, the chair may ask general consent for the member to continue. He may say, "Is there any objection to extending the member's time two minutes?"

The motions we have discussed up to now—main motions, postpone indefinitely, amend, commit to a committee, and postpone to a definite time—have all been debatable. Motions to limit or extend debate are not debatable. The reason is that a motion to limit debate shows that the members are concerned with running out of time. A motion to extend debate indicates some members think that not enough time is being spent on the main motion. In neither case would it serve a useful purpose to use up time discussing the merits of limiting or extending debate. These motions can be amended, however, but the amendments cannot be debated.

Previous Question or Stop Debate

The second highest ranking subsidiary motion can stop debate and bring the main motion immediately to a vote. The motion is usually called "Previous Question" in parliamentary authorities, but this old term from 17th Century England is misleading today. A better name for this class of motions would be Stop Debate or Vote Immediately.

When this motion is approved, all discussion including the making of amendments is stopped and the chair puts the main motion to a vote.

A member makes the motion this way, "I move that debate be stopped on this motion." Or, "I move the previous question on this motion." What vote is required to approve the motion? Two-thirds, of course, because it interferes with the rights of members to continue discussion.

Lay on the Table

The term "Lay on the Table" comes from the English Parliament. One well-known parliamentary authority, *Sturgis Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure*, calls this motion "Postpone Temporarily." That is what the highest ranking subsidiary motion does; it sets the main motion aside so more pressing business can be acted upon.

A member makes the motion by saying, "I move that the motion be laid on the table." It requires a second and a majority vote to pass.

When members move to lay a motion on the table *until a specified time*, the motion is not really to lay on the table but to postpone to a definite time. Since "postpone to a definite time" ranks lower, it may be out of order. Both members and the chair should be aware of this distinction. To continue its rank of highest subsidiary motion, lay on the table must not include a specific time.

Other members may try to use the motion to lay on the table to kill the main motion. Postpone indefinitely, the lowest-ranking subsidiary motion, can be used in this way. But lay on the table sets aside a motion only temporarily. It can be returned for consideration if the members vote to take the motion from the table (see Chapter 10).

Remember, you can move a motion that is higher in rank than the one on the floor, but not one that is lower in rank. To remember the rank, let's take the first letter from each of the seven classes of subsidiary motions: *P* from Postpone Indefinitely, *A* from Amend, *C* from Commit or Refer to a Committee, *P* from Postpone to a Definite Time, *L* from Limit or Extend Debate, *P* from Previous Question and *L* from Lay on the Table. Now let's use each letter in this memory aid: President And Chairmen, Please Learn Parliamentary Law.

8. Privileged Motions

"In that case," said the Dodo solemnly, rising to its feet, "I move that the meeting adjourn . . . ."

We have learned that the main motion introduces business to the organization and that the subsidiary motions help dispose of the main motion or move it along.

The rights of members are also important. In fact, motions relating to the rights of members are the most important motions and they rank highest of all. Motions concerned with the rights of members are called *privileged motions.*

There are five privileged motions in order from lowest to highest: Call for the Orders of the Day, Raise a Question of Privilege, Recess, Adjourn, and Fix the Time to Which to Adjourn. We can use the first letter of each of these five motions to make this memory aid: Club Rules Really Accent Freedom.

Call for the Orders of the Day

We've all attended meetings that have wandered away from the agenda of the order of business. Or, if there is a special order, a member may notice that the time for it has come but the chair has apparently forgotten about it. The presiding officer is responsible for keeping the meeting on schedule or on the "orders of the day." But if he does not, any member may do so.

The privileged motion Call for the Orders of the Day can be moved at any time by a member, even if it interrupts discussion on the floor. Unlike any motion we have discussed so far, it requires no second, no discussion and no vote. The motion is made simply, "Mr. Chairman, I call for the orders of the day." The member does not rise, nor wait for the chair to recognize him. When the chair hears this demand, he says, "The orders of the day are called for. A special order was made for this time. It is . . . . " Or, "The orders of the day are called for. The motion on the floor is . . . ."

If a member then rises and moves that the rules be suspended to take up a specified item of business out of order, the motion—if seconded—is put to a vote. If it is passed by a two-thirds vote, the members continue to discuss the matter that was on the floor when the orders of the day were called for.

Point of Order is another motion that can be used to bring an organization back to its agenda. For this reason, some parliamentary authorities, like Sturgis, do not list Call for the Orders of the Day in the privileged motions. Point of Order is discussed in the next chapter.

Call for the Orders of the Day is the fifth and lowest ranking privileged motion.

Raise a Question of Privilege

Questions of privilege are the fourth-highest ranking privileged motions. We are concerned with two kinds of privilege here: that of the members and that of an individual. If two questions of privilege are ever raised at the same time, the one affecting all the members takes precedence over the one affecting only one member. A question of privilege is not seconded, it is not discussed, and it is not voted upon. If necessary, a member may interrupt a speaker on the floor to raise it.

Here is an example of a question of privilege affecting all the members: One member rises and says, "Mr. President, I rise to a question of privilege affecting the members."

The president responds, "State your question."

The member resumes, "We can't hear. Is the public address system turned on?" The chair, then, takes the measures required so that the members can hear.

A question of personal privilege may be raised this way: A member rises and says, "Madam President, I rise to a question of personal privilege."

"State your question," the president says.

"I don't have an agenda. Are there more copies?" The president sees that the member is given a copy if there are more available.

Recess

The motion to recess, or have an intermission in the meeting, is familiar to all of us. If it is made when no other motion is on the floor, it is one of the incidental main motions discussed in Chapter 4. When another motion is on the floor, the motion to recess is a privileged motion, the third highest in rank.

Unlike the first two privileged motions, the motion to recess cannot interrupt a speaker on the floor; it must be seconded, and it must be approved by majority vote. Of course it can be amended, but neither the amendments nor the motion to recess may be discussed.

The member rises and addresses the chair. After recognition, he says "I move that we take a recess." The motion is seconded and then stated by the chair. Immediately before the motion is put to a vote, a member may rise, and say after recognition, "I move to amend the motion by adding 'of ten minutes' after the word 'recess.'" The amendment is seconded and approved. Then the chair says, "The motion now states that we take a recess of ten minutes." He takes the vote and announces the result.

Let's assume that the motion to recess has passed. When the ten minutes are over, the chair announces that recess is over and resumes the meeting exactly where it was when the recess began.

Recesses can also be taken by general consent. If, for example, the members have finished marking ballots and it's time for the votes to be counted, the chair may say, "If there is no objection, there will be a ten-minute recess so that the tellers may count the ballots."

If neither the maker of the motion nor the chair can foretell the amount of time necessary to count ballots, have refreshments, etc., the motion can be, "I move that we recess until the call of the chair."

Obviously, a recess does not end a meeting, it merely interrupts it. If a member wishes to end a meeting, he would make the motion to adjourn.

Adjourn

The motion to adjourn is the second highest privileged motion. Like the motion to recess, the motion to adjourn may also be made when no other business is pending. Then it is an incidental main motion.

The privileged motion to adjourn can be made when business is pending, but it cannot be made when another member has the floor. It must be seconded, it is neither discussed nor amended, and it must be approved by majority vote.

The member says, "I move that we adjourn." If the motion is seconded, the chair states it and puts it to a vote. It's the duty of the chair to remind the members of any important business that must be decided at the meeting before he takes the vote on the motion to adjourn. And, until the chair actually says, "The meeting is adjourned," it is still in session even if the majority voted to adjourn. Announcements, previous notice, and similar important statements can be made between the vote and the official adjournment of the meeting. A tap of the gavel frequently accompanies the chair's announcement that "the meeting is adjourned."

When there is no more business to consider, the meeting can be adjourned by general consent. Or, if the remaining business is not urgent and the chair senses that the members are ready to adjourn, general consent may be used.

In the first case, the chair says, "Is there any further business?" He pauses to listen for the response, then says, "If there is no further business, the meeting is adjourned."

In the second circumstance, the chair says, "If there is no objection, the meeting will be adjourned."

Business that was on the floor when the meeting adjourned is taken up at the next meeting under unfinished business, beginning at the point it was when the meeting adjourned.

Fix a Time to Which To Adjourn

We have seen that organizations can adjourn meetings even when business is on the floor. If the business can wait until the next meeting, there is no problem; but sometimes business must be completed at a certain meeting. Members don't have to meet until three in the morning to elect officers, however. Instead, they can use the highest-ranking privileged motion, Fix a Time to Which to Adjourn.

This long-named motion really sets a time for the continuation of a meeting. If no other motion is pending, the motion fixing the time to which to adjourn is an incidental main motion. If other business is pending, the motion cannot interrupt a speaker, it must be seconded, and it must be approved by majority vote. The motion cannot be discussed, but it can be amended to suggest other times or places to which to adjourn.

A member makes the motion by saying, "I move that when we adjourn, we adjourn to 3:00 p.m. tomorrow." If the motion passes, the time is set for a continuation of the meeting, but the meeting is not adjourned. When it does adjourn, the members know it will take up again the following afternoon.

Some parliamentary authorities combine this motion with the motion to adjourn. However it is classified, it is a useful, though rarely used, motion.

The main motion, the subsidiary motions, and the privileged motions form a thirteen-rank order of prededence. These are all of the motions that follow a precedence system. It would be rare indeed to have all thirteen motions pending at once. But it is important to know the order so that time will not be wasted by making a motion that is not in order.

9. Incidental Motions, Requests, and Inquiries

Here one of the guinea pigs cheered and was immediately suppressed by the officers . . .

Here the other guinea pig cheered, and was suppressed.

"Come, that finishes the guinea pigs!" thought Alice. "Now we shall get on better."

Incidental motions develop out of the business being done. They have no rank and most of them cannot be discussed, but there the similarity to main motions ends. Some require seconds, others must be approved by two-thirds vote, and a few may interrupt a speaker on the floor.

Division of the Assembly

As described in Chapter 5, a single member may demand a rising vote if he doubts the accuracy of the chair's announcement of a voice vote. This incidental motion may interrupt a speaker; it requires no second, and no vote, but it compels the chair to call for a rising vote on the motion just voted upon.

Motions Related to Nominations

The incidental motion to close nominations must be seconded, takes a two-thirds vote to pass, and cannot interrupt a speaker. Similarly, the motion to re-open nominations cannot interrupt a speaker and must be seconded, but a majority vote is all that is required to approve it. Both motions cannot be discussed but can be amended.

Other motions related to nominations are those proposing how nominations should be made, as discussed in Chapter 6. The motion to create a blank, explained in Chapter 7, is also an incidental motion whose procedure is similar to that of making nominations.

Motions Related to Voting

Motions to use any of the methods of voting in Chapter 5 are incidental, as is a motion to stop or resume voting by ballot by closing or re-opening the polls. These motions are not in order when a speaker has the floor, must be seconded, and are amendable but not debatable. All require a majority vote except the motion to close the polls, which requires a two-thirds vote for approval (because it limits members' rights).

Point of Order

In the discussion of the lowest-ranking privileged motion, Call for the Orders of the Day, we noted that Point of Order could also be used to return a meeting to its agenda. Point of Order can be used whenever a member notices that the rules are not being followed. Serious violations that can cause problems to the organization should be brought to the attention of the chair at once, interrupting a speaker if necessary. For example, suppose that a main motion is on the floor and during its discussion a second main motion is made and seconded. The member who notices this error should rise and say without waiting to be recognized, "Mister President, I rise to a point of order," or, "Point of order!"

The chair responds, "State your point."

The member says, "This last motion is out of order because another main motion was already on the floor."

"The point is well taken," the chair says, "and the last motion is out of order." Then the deliberations continue on the first motion on the floor.

If the chair does not agree that the point is valid, he says that the point is not well taken and briefly explains why the rules are not being broken. For example, "The point of order is not well taken because the preceding main motion has been postponed until the next meeting. The member who was speaking will please continue."

A point of order may be raised also to stop discourteous conduct. If the chair does not silence members who disrupt the meeting or if the chair does not call a speaker to order who is making personal remarks, then a member may make

a point of order concerning these infractions.

Points of order must be raised as soon as the errors are made. Usually, it is best to ignore minor breaches of the rules that will cause no problems. Under no circumstances should Point of Order be used to obstruct the business of the organization.

Appeal

There are several motions like Point of Order in which the chair makes the decision alone, rather than with the members voting. What happens if a member disagrees with the chair's ruling? He can appeal from the decision of the chair.

Suppose that this motion is on the floor: "that the Athletic Club pay the expenses of the tennis team not to exceed $100." A member then moves, "to amend the motion by striking 'tennis' and inserting 'swim'." The chair was just about to speak when another member quickly seconded the motion. The chair ignored the second and said, "The amendment is not in order because it is not *germane* to the motion."

The member offering the amendment knew that *germane* meant closely related and he thought that the change he proposed was certainly related to the main motion. So he rose and said before any other business could be taken up, "Mister President, I appeal from the decision of the chair." A member seconded the motion and the chair stated, "It has been moved and seconded to appeal from the decision of the chair. The question is: should the decision of the chair be sustained?"

Discussion is then in order on almost all appeals. But the rules for debating appeal are different from those of debating any other motion. The chair may speak on the question and speak first, stating his views. Also, the chair may speak twice, while all other members are limited to one speech each. In the first speech, the chair explains the reasons for his decision. A second speech reiterating those reasons may be made at the close of the discussion.

In this instance, the chair might say before he recognizes any other member, "The amendment is not germane because it would, in effect, transform the motion into an entirely new question. The concern, here, is not how to spend $100; it is that the tennis team be allowed up to $100 for its travel expenses. If the Club wishes to consider allotting $100 for swim team expenses, that motion can be introduced when the pending motion has been disposed of. Therefore, the amendment to strike 'tennis' and insert 'swim' is not germane."

When the motion is put to a vote, the chair says, "Shall the decision of the chair be sustained?" The question is on the decision, not on the chair, so it would be incorrect to say, "Shall the chair be sustained?"

Another interesting aspect to this motion is that either a majority vote or a *tie vote* sustains the chair. The reason is that a majority vote is required to overrule the chair.

Appeals and Points of Order are recorded in the minutes.

Parliamentary Inquiry and Point of Information

When a member wants to know about a point of parliamentary procedure important to the business being done, he rises and says, "Mr. President, I rise to a parliamentary inquiry." He may interrupt a speaker if necessary.

The chair says, "State your inquiry."

"Is it in order to amend an amendment?"

The chair states that it is, providing no other secondary amendment is on the floor. Then the business that was interrupted is resumed.

Point of Information is similar to Parliamentary Inquiry, except that it is for questions not concerned with parliamentary procedure. For example, "A point of information, please. What is the cost of the bids for the Spring Dance?"

Neither Parliamentary Inquiry nor Point of Information requires seconds or votes. Nor can the chair's opinion on them be appealed. This does not mean that the organization must conform to the chair's misunderstanding of some point of parliamentary procedure. If in the preceding Parliamen-

tary Inquiry example the chair had said that any amendment to an amendment was out of order, the members should not challenge at that time. Instead, one of them can offer the secondary amendment he had in mind when he made the parliamentary inquiry. Then, when the chair rules it out of order, the member can appeal from the decision of the chair.

Request for Permission to Withdraw or Modify a Motion

In analyzing the making of a main motion in Chapter 4, we noted that a motion can be withdrawn or changed by its maker until it is stated by the chair. After the chair states it, another motion must be made to withdraw it. The maker of the original motion may state his request like this, "Madame President, I ask permission to withdraw the motion." It is seconded. The chair would then probably ask for general consent to grant this request. If there is an objection, however, the question to withdraw the motion is put to a vote. A majority vote is required to approve the withdrawal.

Request to be Excused from Duty

Unlike the preceding requests, the motion requesting excuse from duty can be discussed and it is amendable. It is used by members who wish to be released from a specific task or by officers who find they must resign from office.

Most of the time, a statement like this one is sufficient, "Madam President, I request permission to be excused from the initiation dinner."

An officer giving up his position, however, should submit a letter of resignation. The letter is read and a vote taken on the acceptance of the resignation.

Request to Read Papers

Members familiar with only the basic elements of parliamentary procedure are often surprised to learn that excerpts from books and other written materials cannot be read without the permission of the members. Usually, this is given by general consent. The member should say, "If there is no objection, I would like to read from . . . ." If there is an objection, the chair must put the question to a vote. A majority is required to approve the request.

Other Requests

Any other request can be made by the member after he obtains the floor and states his request. General consent is used to decide most requests. If a member objects, the question is then decided by majority vote.

Division of a Question

A motion with several parts can be split into its separate elements by the motion to Divide the Question. The motion must state how the question is to be divided, however. The motion is out of order if a speaker is on the floor, it must be seconded, it is not debatable but it can be amended, and it requires a majority vote to pass.

The following recommendation may be divided after "House" and after "courts." "*Resolved*, that the Oak Park Athletic Club accept the offer of the Oak Park Association to meet at the Club House, to use the tennis courts, and to use the pool." If one or two of the parts is defeated, the Club can still use the facilities it did approve.

On the other hand, the motion "that the Athletic Club pay the travel expenses of the tennis team not to exceed $100" cannot be divided because one part cannot function unless the other part is also passed.

Consideration by Paragraph

Resolutions frequently have separate paragraphs beginning with the word "resolved" and sometimes several paragraphs in the preamble beginning with "whereas." These resolutions and other long documents, like a set of bylaws or a report that must be approved, can be considered by paragraph or, by its Latin term, seriatim.

The chair does not have to wait for a motion to consider

a long measure in this way, but if the chair does not present it in paragraphs, a member may make the motion to do so. He would say, "Madame President, I move that the resolution be considered by paragraph." The motion must be seconded, it is not debatable but it is amendable, and it is passed by a majority vote.

Suspend the Rules

When Call for the Orders of the Day was discussed in Chapter 8, we noted that an organization could, by a two-thirds vote, suspend the rules prohibiting the consideration of a particular item of business. This is an incidental motion that can be made by any member after recognition by the chair. It must be seconded and is neither debatable nor amendable.

Bylaws cannot be set aside in this way, but standing rules usually can. The motion is made like this, "Mister Chairman, I move to suspend the rules interfering with the consideration of the resolution to accept the Association's offer." Making a motion just to "suspend the rules" is not only poor form, but it is reckless, for the organization is really suspending all rules except its bylaws and any other rules that cannot be suspended by two-thirds vote without notice.

Objection to the Consideration of a Question

In the discussion of Postpone Indefinitely, it became apparent that some motions are potentially embarrassing or awkward for an organization to handle. Rather than wait until the motion is being discussed, the better method is to Object to the Consideration of the Question. This motion can be made by any member before discussion has begun and before any subsidiary motions are moved on the original main motion. If necessary, the motion to object to consideration can interrupt a member on the floor. It is neither debatable nor amendable and requires a two-thirds vote against the consideration of the question. It does not require a second according to *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised,* but *Sturgis Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure* does require one.

The member makes the motion by saying, "Mr. President, I object to the consideration of this question." The chairman says, "Objection to consideration has been made. Should the question on the floor be considered? Those in favor of considering it please rise. (Pause.) Those opposed to consideration of the question please rise." If two-thirds or more object to the consideration of the question, the main motion is no longer on the floor and the next item of business is taken up.

10. Restoratory and Related Motions

"Yes, all his horses and all his men," Humpty Dumpty went on. "They'd pick me up again in a minute, they would!"

Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised, calls the motions Take from the Table, Discharge a Committee, Rescind, and Reconsider "motions that bring a question again before the assembly." A better name for them, Restoratory Motions, is found in another good parliamentary authority, *Demeter's Manual of Parliamentary Law and Procedure.* For all practical purposes, they are introduced like main motions. They are not in order when other business is on the floor and they must be seconded, but there the similarity ends.

Take from the Table

If there is a motion to lay a question on the table, it follows that there must be a motion to take the question from the table. Lay on the Table is the highest ranking subsidiary motion (see Chapter 7). Its purpose is to temporarily set aside a particular item of business so that something more pressing may be taken up. When the more urgent business has been considered and there is no other business on the floor, a member may obtain the floor and say, "I move that the motion concerning the Spring Dance be taken from the table." The motion must be seconded and approved by majority vote, but it cannot be debated or amended. If the motion is adopted, the chair states the question that was tabled and consideration of it begins where it had stopped earlier.

The motion to take a question from the table can be made as soon as the business for which it was laid on the table has been finished. But often the question lays on the table through several items of business. If the meeting adjourns, the question can be taken from the table at the next regular meeting, but if that meeting adjourns without taking the question from the table, the tabled question dies. The motion to Lay on the Table is an incorrect and ineffective way to try to kill a main motion, however. The reason is that the motion, unlike Postpone Indefinitely, can be taken from the table at any time within the limits described above.

Discharge a Committee

Discharging a committee really means that the motion referred to the committee is being returned for consideration by the membership as a whole. There are two reasons for this action: first, between the time that a motion was referred to a committee and the time the committee was to report, something occurred that caused the larger body to want to consider the motion again. Second, the committee failed to report on the motion at the specified time or submitted only a partial report. The reason for the motion affects the vote required to approve it.

The motion cannot interrupt business on the floor. After recognition, a member makes the motion like this: "I move that the Ways and Means Committee be discharged from further consideration of the motion relating to the sale of refreshments at Little League games." Or, "I move that the committee to which was referred the motion to sponsor a tots' swim meet be discharged."

It must be seconded and is debatable and amendable. If the committee fails to report on time or submits only a partial report, the motion to discharge it requires only a majority vote. In the other instance, the motion requires one of the following to pass: a two-thirds vote or a majority vote of those assembled if notice of the motion has been given.

If the motion to discharge a committee is adopted, the question thus restored may be stated at once by the chair or it may be postponed to a certain time. However, it cannot be postponed without a motion to do so.

What happens to a committee after it has been discharged? If it is a standing committee, the committee continues to exist. It is only denied further consideration of the specific question taken from it. If the committee is a special committee created solely for the consideration of the ques-

tion taken from it, the committee automatically ceases to exist.

No motion is required to discharge a special committee when it finishes its work. It automatically disbands when its report is made.

Rescind or Amend Something Previously Adopted

By the use of this motion, organizations can amend bylaws or reverse a previous action. Chapter 3 explained how the motion to rescind can be accompanied by the order to expunge a regretted act from the minutes.

Rescind is also known as repeal or annul. The purpose is the same: to take back a decision of the organization. Amend Something Previously Adopted is the same motion also, except that it does not reverse or change the whole previous action, just a part of it.

Bylaws usually require previous notice for amendment. Previous notice should also be given if rescinding or amending a past action is likely to have serious opposition. If previous notice is given, a majority of those present can approve the rescinding or the amending of a past action. Otherwise, a two-thirds vote or a majority of the entire membership is required to approve the motion. Bylaws and special rules of order usually require a two-thirds vote to rescind or amend, as well as previous notice.

There are some actions that cannot be rescinded or amended. If something has been carried out, it cannot be taken back. For example, if the tennis team was paid $100 for its expenses, the organization cannot take the money back or decrease the amount. In fact, once the members of the tennis team decide to travel because the motion has been passed to give them $100 toward their expenses, the money cannot be withheld. But if no action has been taken on an approved motion, it may be rescinded or amended.

To make the motion, the member says, "I move to rescind the motion relating to the sale of refreshments at Little League games." It must be seconded; it is debatable and also amendable. Rescind and Amend Something Previously Adopted have no time limitations.

Reconsider

The motion to reconsider is probably the most complicated and the least understood of all the motions. Its purpose is to re-examine the decision taken on a motion and, in consequence, to re-examine the motion itself. Unlike Rescind or Amend Something Previously Adopted, the motion to reconsider does not propose a reversal; it proposes a review after which the earlier decision may still stand.

Because the motion to reconsider is used to correct hasty or unwise decisions, it must be moved before subsequent action is taken on the original motion and, in most instances, at the meeting at which the original motion was voted upon. In its simplest form, a member obtains the floor and says, "I move to reconsider the vote taken on the motion relating to the Spring Dance." The motion is seconded and, if the original motion was debatable, the motion to reconsider it is also debatable, entering into the merits of the original motion itself. The motion to reconsider is not amendable, however, and it requires a majority vote to pass. If the majority approves reconsideration, the original main motion returns to the floor as if no vote had been taken on it. Votes that defeat a motion can be reconsidered as well as votes that approve it. Not all motions may be reconsidered, however.

Organizations using *Sturgis Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure* for their parliamentary authority can use Reconsider in the form given above, but if *Robert's* or works based on it are used, only a member voting on the winning side can move to reconsider the vote. This restriction is an attempt to keep the motion to reconsider from being used to obstruct business.

Under *Robert's* then, a member makes the motion like this, "I move to reconsider the vote taken on the motion relating to the swim meet." I voted for (or against) the motion."

In committee, any member may make the motion to reconsider and there is no time limitation for the motion, but obviously, it cannot be made if the action approved in the motion to be reconsidered has already been performed.

The motion to reconsider can, if necessary, be made when another question is on the floor. But the consideration of the motion thus restored must wait until the interrupted business has been concluded.

For example, suppose that this motion had been approved by majority vote: "that the Spring Dance be held on March 26." Then, during the close of the business meeting, it was discovered that this date was in conflict with an important sporting event involving many of the club's members. A member who had voted for the dance motion wanted to be sure that the motion was reconsidered before the meeting ended. He waited until one speaker had finished and before another could begin. Then he rose and said, "Madame President, I move to reconsider the vote taken on the motion relating to the Spring Dance. I voted for the motion." Another member seconds the motion and the chair directs the secretary to note that the motion was made and seconded.

When the business on the floor is concluded, any member may obtain the floor and say, "I call up the motion to reconsider the motion relating to the Spring Dance." No motion or second has been made. Calling up the motion to reconsider merely takes it from the secretary's note to the floor. If the motion is not called up at the meeting at which it is made, the motion dies.

Organizations using *Robert's* also have a motion called Reconsider and Enter on the Minutes that requires a process similar to the one just described. However, when the motion to reconsider is entered on the minutes, it cannot be called up until the next regular meeting. If it is *not* called up at that meeting, it dies.

The reason for this delaying motion is to prevent a present majority that does not represent the thinking of the majority of *all* the members from committing the organization to an unpopular action. In practice, however, it gives two people—the maker of the motion and the one who seconds it—the power to stop consideration of action on any main motion that has been voted upon.

Ratify, Approve, or Confirm

Sometimes organizations are faced with an important question to decide when a quorum is not present. The best way to handle this situation is to recess and try to urge enough members to attend to make a quorum, or to fix a time to which to adjourn. If these measures fail, or if for some reason they are not attempted, the attending members may find themselves taking actions that must be approved by the organization. Obviously, this procedure is risky and can cause problems.

At the next regular meeting, then, the motion would be made to ratify the actions taken at the meeting at which there was no quorum. This is not a restoratory motion; the members cannot undo what was done. But by majority vote the members can ratify what was done. If the motion to ratify is defeated, the members taking the action without a quorum can be held responsible for debts, etc., they approved without authority. The organization may even vote to *censure* the members, that is to condemn the members for acting without a quorum.

Renewing

If a main motion could be renewed at any time, there would be no need for motions to rescind, to amend something previously adopted, to reconsider, or to take from the table. The motions could just be brought up again like Recess or Adjourn which can be made several times in any meeting. But if this were the case, there would be no stability in an organization. No person would bother to act on a motion, because the need for the work done could be canceled out at the next meeting. Businesses would not enter

into contracts involving even short-term credit for fear the action authorizing the transaction would be reversed at a subsequent meeting. And, at each meeting, as soon as a motion was voted upon, it could be renewed again by those who were sorry it won or lost.

Main motions cannot be renewed, then, at the same meeting. But if a motion is withdrawn, it can be made again at the same meeting. It is also in order to renew a defeated main motion at the next regular meeting.

Obviously, a motion that passed cannot be renewed. Changes in or cancellation of motions previously approved must be handled through the motions to rescind or to amend something previously adopted.

Motions That Are Out of Order

We have seen that amendments not germane to the main motion and motions renewed at the same meeting are out of order. It is the chair's responsibility to name them as such and to go to the next item of business. Or, if the chair fails to exercise this responsibility, a member may rise to a Point of Order to force a decision from the chair.

It is important to note that the chair does not find the member making the motion out of order, it is the *motion* that is out of order. For example, the chair might say, "The motion to amend is not in order because there is already one primary amendment on the floor."

Other motions that would be out of order are those that propose any violation of federal, state or local law. Also, any motion beyond the scope or purpose of the organization would be out of order.

Dilatory Motions

Any motions made for the purpose of obstructing the business of the meeting or confusing the objectives of the meeting is dilatory. Abuse of the motion to Reconsider and Enter on the Minutes, Point of Order, and others should not be allowed by the chair. He should say that the motion is "out of order" and go on to the next motion or item of business. If the chair's decision is appealed, he should frankly state that the motion in question is dilatory and why. If the members agree, they should certainly sustain the decision of the chair. No organization needs to be victimized by one member or small group of members whose motives are to slow down, obstruct, or confuse the business of the organization. Nor must it suffer the excesses of members who wish to "show off" their knowledge of parliamentary procedure. A member who is guilty of "showing off' has failed to understand the basic premise of parliamentary procedure: to do business democratically and efficiently.

The chair may also withhold recognition from a member notorious for dilatory or frivolous motions. But withholding recognition is awkward if the member really intended to make a legitimate motion. Fortunately, one or two "put downs" by the chair or the organization usually discourages the making of dilatory motions.

Appendix

An Agenda Planner

This form may help the officers in planning the agenda.

Meeting Date _____ Regular ___ Special ___
Meeting Place _____
Officers Excused _____
Guests Expected _____
Minutes, Previous Meeting Only ___ Of Meetings on _____
_____
Correspondence _____
_____
Officers' Reports. Treasurer's Statement Only _____
Others _____
_____
Board Report. Yes _____ No _____ Given By _____
Standing Committees. Yes _____ No _____
_____ Committee, _____ Reporting
_____ Committee, _____ Reporting
_____ Committee, _____ Reporting

Special Committees. Yes _____ No _____
_____ Committee, _____ Reporting
_____ Committee, _____ Reporting
Special Orders. Yes _____ No _____
_____ Time Specified? _____
_____ Time Specified? _____
Unfinished Business and General Orders. Yes _____ No ___
_____
_____
_____
_____
New Business to be Offered:
_____ by _____
_____ by _____
_____ by _____
_____ by _____

Announcements:
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
Program:
_____
_____
_____
_____

A Sample Agenda

Advance planning should produce an agenda for the meeting that looks something like this:

AGENDA
For the Regular Meeting of the
OAK PARK ATHLETIC CLUB,
Tuesday, April 13, 1999

Call to Order
Minutes
Treasurer's Report
Correspondence
Report of Executive Board: Ralph Washington
Reports of Standing Committees
  Membership Committee: Gerald Cohen
Reports of Special Committees
  Tot Meet: Bill Stevenson
Unfinished Business:
  Tennis Tournament Expenses
New Business
Announcements
Program
Adjournment

Precedence Chart

"That's the way it's done," the Queen said with great decision. "Nobody can do two things at once, you know."

Here are the basic characteristics of the main motion (M), the subsidiary motions (S), and the privileged motions (P) at a glance. The lowest ranking motion is on the bottom. Note that most information concerning reconsideration has been omitted. You may add that from your own research.

	Class	Seconded	Vote	Debatable	Amendable	In order if another has the floor
Fix Time . . . Adjourn	P	ys	mj	no	ys	no
Adjourn	P	ys	mj	no	no	no
Recess	P	ys	mj	no	ys	no
Raise Question of Privilege	P	no	no	no	no	ys
Call for Orders of Day	P	no	no	no	no	ys
Lay on Table	S	ys	mj	no	no	no
Prev. Question or Stop Debate	S	ys	2/3	no	no	no
Limit/Extend Debate	S	ys	2/3	no	ys	no
Postpone to Certain Time	S	ys	mj*	ys	ys	no
Commit, Refer to Committee	S	ys	mj	ys	ys	no
Amend	S	ys	mj	ys	ys	no
Postpone Indefinitely (Reconsider by affirm. vote only)	S	ys	mj	ys	no	no
Main Motion (May be reconsidered)	M	ys	mj	ys	ys	no

*Special orders require 2/3 vote.

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